VALLEY VOICE

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A sign at the Valley Oak SPCA

Political Warfare Comes to the Once-Quiet Community of Dinuba

DAVID MARSH

The normal quiet, steady flow of small town politics in the city of Dinuba, tucked away in the rural northeastern reaches of Tulare County, has taken on an ugly face that threatens to rip the fabric of the once-tranquil community.

Many in this community of approximately 24,000 residents are shocked and angry over what they see as a no-holds-barred, gutter-level mentality spreading throughout their community as a determined recall drive targeting the city's mayor and two city council members moves forward.

Citing what they allege as repeated examples of fiscal mismanagement and chronic over-spending by city leaders, cronyism, lack of transparency and city leadership isolated from the people they serve, the dozen or so members of Grassroots – Citizens for Dinuba are going door to door, district by district, collecting the signatures needed to force a recall in a community where no one seems able to remember one before.

The three targeted council members say they are stunned as they have watched the tone of the recall campaign quickly descend to what they regard as a level of viciousness quite unlike anything the community has known.

"The citizens group is going door-to-door spreading outright lies and saying anything just to get the signatures they want," said Dinuba City Council Member Mike Smith, "going as far as changing their stories and lies from one door to the next. It's totally crazy the things they claim the council has done."

Smith said that the group has passed out flyers alleging that council members have voted themselves and upper-management city workers 4% pay raises for three consecutive calendar years, flagrantly violating rules set forth in the city's charter. Smith said he still banks the same $257 take home pay

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Cat Colonies: Finding Solutions – Part Three

CATHERINE DOE

College of the Sequoias is implementing a TNR Program that would solve the cat problem at Mooney Grove by the end of 2014.

After listening to everyone involved, the solution to managing the cat population in Mooney Grove was there all the time – the Trap, Neuter and Release Program that was suggested in the first place. The Valley Oak SPCA, the national SPCA, and all other organizations concerned with the health and welfare of animals have already done the research. When dealing with a colony of abandoned and feral cats all organizations recommend using the TNR program.

So when Steve Surowiec, a language professor at COS, called asking for help with a group of feral cats outside his classroom, Kelly Austin, administrative Services Manager at the Valley Oak SPCA, first suggested TNR. The colony has now been stabilized for two years.

Ralph Mallouf, COS grounds and facilities manager, asked for Surowiec's help because they needed a comprehensive approach to a campus-wide cat problem. Mallouf was concerned about the time and money needed to deal with a colony that had doubled in size on the south side of campus, and another possible colony by a dumpster. His bosses were quite pleased to hear that the cat problem would be solved at no cost of life and no cost to the college.

"I don't think people have to be cat lovers to look at the data and see that TNR works. COS wants the problem solved. They have other things to do," said Surowiec.

Tulare County Animal Control might also agree. But their hands are tied. They are under the umbrella of Tulare County Health and Human

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Valley Ag to Reap Rewards of Blooming Trade Pacts

CONGRESSMAN DEVIN NUNES

The San Joaquin Valley has suffered for years from over-regulation and a resulting man-made drought. With the U.S. Senate having blocked a comprehensive water solution, the lack of surface water is creating excessive demand on the aquifer, threatening even worse water problems in the future. These policies – imposed by big-government adherents and environmental extremists – have been particularly harmful to small farms, many of which are now struggling just to survive.

Congressman Devin Nunes

Today the fight continues for farmers' simple right to cultivate their own land – this is a battle we must win and eventually will. But in the meantime, some major trade initiatives are advancing that would create ag jobs while dramatically improving conditions for Valley farmers and farmworkers, their families and the many local industries associated with agriculture.

The first of these agreements, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), will reduce trade barriers among thirteen countries in the Asia-Pacific region, creating vast new markets for U.S. agricultural goods. For example, U.S. dairy producers will gain better access to Malaysia and Vietnam, where dairy consumption is rising rapidly, as well as to Canada – California's biggest agriculture export market – which retains barriers that can double or triple the cost of dairy products.

Consider the implications of reaching an agreement with just one TPP participant – Japan. That is the fourth-largest market for California agriculture exports despite its imposition of extensive barriers and tariffs that have frustrated U.S. exporters for decades. It is the fourth-largest market for California dairy goods – even though its dairy tariffs average 93 percent – and it is the second biggest export market for California blueberries, dried plums, raisins, cherries, raspberries and blackberries, strawberries, lemons, olives and olive oil, and tangerines and mandarins. If our farmers can do so well in Japan even when their goods are delayed, obstructed, and sold at artificially inflated prices, just imagine the possibilities – more sales, more investment, more business expansion and more jobs – if they competed on a level playing field.

The second major agreement is the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which will create a giant free-trade zone between the United States and Europe. U.S. negotiators aim to eliminate all tariffs facing U.S. goods in Europe and to reduce or remove so-called "behind-the-border" barriers that block some U.S. agricultural goods from the European market. A top priority

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Valley Officials and Others Share Their New Year's Resolutions

COMPILED BY STEVE PASTIS

The *Valley Voice* asked local elected officials, public servants and others in the community to share their resolutions for 2014. As expected, we received a wide range of responses.

"My New Year's resolution is to try to remember every day how short and precious life is and to remember that God has a purpose for us while we are here on earth," said Visalia Police Chief Colleen Mestas.

"Our resolution at the chamber is to be much more aggressive in supporting businesses in Visalia with tools, training and information so that they can succeed," said Glenn Morris, president/CEO of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce. "We will also continue to support entrepreneurs in our community in their efforts to expand and build our local economy. On a personal note, my aim this year is to use the time and talents I have been blessed with to serve where and how I can."

Tulare County Auditor-Controller/Treasurer-Tax Collector/Registrar of Voters Rita Woodard's New Year's resolution is to lose weight. "Still working on this one from last year – but this year I really mean it!" she said. "Will walk more during the day and eat healthier to make it happen. And take a trip – still have nine states to go! At work, research, then install a better credit/debit card service that better serves our customers, and install a better system of processing voters on Election Day."

"My New Year's resolution is about being creative," said Tulare County Acting Sheriff Mike Boudreaux. "I want to make every day count by creating and moving forward with ideas and concepts that move our department into the future. I will continue to be proactive while being innovative in serving the communities of Tulare County. Creativity brings new concepts and design. I am looking forward to the future of our department with advancements in technology and how these will serve our communities."

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- Wishing You a Safe Holiday Season -

FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

T.A.N.S.T.A.A.F.L.

On the first day of high school physics, our teacher chalked T.A.N.S.T.A.A.F.L. onto the blackboard. He then turned to us, pointed at what was obviously an acronym, and asked if anyone knew what the letters stood for. We were all clearly stumped, so he offered a hint. "It's the first rule of physics." When this pearl failed to be illuminating he smiled. "In physics," he said, tapping each period for emphasis, "There. Ain't. No. Such. Thing. As. A. Free. Lunch."

I mention this now because the new year is, simultaneously, a time of reflection on the closing of one year and a projection of aspirations for the new. Thus the traditional resolutions. And the most traditional of these seem always to involve physical improvement: This year, I will finally lose weight; this year, I swear I will exercise regularly; this year, I will eat better...

Let's all keep in mind, though, T.A.N.S.T.A.A.F.L.

According to a recent *New York Times* article, and this is a low estimate, dietary supplements are responsible for upwards of 20 percent of drug-related liver injuries. This is up from seven percent a decade ago. And the supplement industry is not well regulated. Americans spend roughly $32 billion per year--chiefly to melt fat or increase metabolism--while the 1994 Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act prohibits the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) from approving or analyzing most supplements before they are purchased. The result is chaos. The FDA estimates that fully 70 percent of supplement manufacturers do not adhere to even basic quality controls. Of nearly 55,000 supplements sold each year to Americans, only 170 have been studied enough for their side effects to be understood. Since 2008, however, the FDA has been taking action against companies whose products have been found to contain prescription drugs and controlled substances.

It's a step in the right direction, but here's what you should know about these dietary aids: There's no such thing as a magic pill. And because many of these supplements are concentrated, if taken too much they can be lethal. Imagine something so seemingly innocuous as green tea extract. Sounds harmless enough, right? Green tea contains catechins, antioxidants said to increase metabolism. But the extract is concentrated far more than the actual tea itself, and can be toxic to the liver if taken in a large enough dose. So you may burn fat, but you'll certainly burn out your liver.

My advice--and this is not an advice column--is that there are no shortcuts in life.

— Joseph Oldenbourg

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Diabetic Drugs May Be Dangerous To Your Health

New guide sheds light on the dangers of diabetic drugs and why doctors prescribe them anyway. You could be at risk!

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POLITICAL FIX

CATHERINE DOE

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE PRESIDENT?

As an end-of-the-year wrap-up, I asked five of Tulare County's most influential officials to tell our readers who their favorite President of the United States is and why.

Congressman Devin Nunes named George Washington as his favorite President. "Though history is littered with successful generals who went on to seize absolute power, Washington insisted that the United States become a democratic republic, rejecting authoritarian rule by anyone, including himself."

State Assembly Representative Connie Conway said, "President Theodore Roosevelt seemed larger than life and made his dreams a reality despite setbacks that may have forced others to quit. He left a lasting legacy with his role as peacemaker, conservationist and adventurer. One of my favorite quotes from President Roosevelt comes from a speech he delivered in California in 1911, 'It is true of the nation, as of the individual, that the greatest doer must also be a great dreamer.'"

Visalia Mayor Steve Nelsen said, "Favorite President: Ronald Reagan.

Why: President of the people, not a career politician. Also last President that was truly able to work both side of the aisle and gain consensuses."

Vice-Mayor Warren Gubler said, "Abraham Lincoln. Honest Abe was an excellent collection attorney before he was President. As President, he made the tough decisions, without being too concerned about the latest polling data. Also, he was a terrific orator."

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Pete Vander Poel said, "If I had to choose a favorite U.S. President, I would have to say it would be Abraham Lincoln. His ability to be a "uniter," bringing together one country divided over issues that ran deep within individual values and principles, was a thing of greatness. He was neither a Republican nor a Democrat first, he was an American; and that is truly admirable."

VISALIA SUED FOR HOLDING AT-LARGE ELECTIONS

A group of Latinos is suing Visalia after the city council failed to switch from at-large to by-district elections. The group also wants the city council to be elected on even years, when the electorate also votes for Senators, Governor, and President. Many other towns such as Exeter and Farmersville have saved thousands of dollars by making the switch to even-year elections. The Visalia City Council election in November only yielded a 17 percent voter turnout, which is hardly representative of the city's population.

Whereas odd-year elections are expensive and stupid, the by-district election is simply stupid.

If Visalia is 46 percent Hispanic, then there should be two or three Hispanics on the Visalia City Council. How do you dilute 46 percent of the population by having at-large elections? This is not the only demographic group that can be criticized for not voting, but the entire "representative" issue would just go away if Hispanics bothered to vote. Can you imagine if just half of them voted in the November election?

If Visalia is divided into districts, and Hispanic neighborhoods are clumped into one district, which is what they want, then there is never going to be more than one Hispanic on the city council. Until the millennials inherit the earth, history suggests that if a Hispanic runs in a "white" district, they will lose every time. This brings us back to the exact same problem we had before – lack of representation for 46 percent of the people.

Ironically, it is a group of Latino men who initiated the suit against Visalia, alleging that at-large elections of city council members violate the California Voting Rights Act passed in 2001. That it does. But doing voter drives and outreach could result in Hispanics controlling Visalia, but not if it changes to by-district elections.

Tulare, Modesto, Anaheim and Palmdale have been sued for conducting at-large elections, and no local government has ever won a voting rights lawsuit involving this issue. Neither the Visalia City Council, nor the majority of Visalians, agree with by-district elections, but they will not incur the expense of fighting this lawsuit. By-district elections will be a reality by the next time we vote for our city council.

THE BIG EASY IN TULARE COUNTY

On December 20th, Ralph Kaelble sent out a press release declaring that "Louisiana style politics has no place in the Central Valley." Mr. Kaelble accused Tim Ward, Tulare County District Attorney, of firing his wife just a few weeks before Christmas because he is running against him in the 2014 election for the DA's office. The *Visalia Times-Delta* reported on December 23rd that Mr. Kaelble was also fired by Mr. Ward.

According to Mr. Ward, however, Afreen Kaelble was not fired, but signed a letter of resignation on December 4th. He also said that he believes that Mr. Kaelble resigned as well in January of 2013. Other than that, Mr. Ward cannot comment on personnel matters. He did want to say that, "one of the responsibilities I have is to assemble a management team that not only managers have confidence in, but the staff and executive leaders as well."

Mr. Kaelble and Mr. Ward were hired by the Tulare County District Attorney's office around the same time in 1999. Both will be running for the office of Tulare County District Attorney in June of 2014. If neither receives a majority of the vote, a runoff will take place in November. Mr. Ward was appointed Tulare County District Attorney last year when the former district attorney, Phil Cline, retired.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN AVERTED - DEBT CEILING CRISIS ALIVE AND WELL

President Obama just signed a budget bill that ended the threat of a government shutdown for the next two years. Now that Congress has passed a budget, i.e. spent the money, will they pay their bills?

The Treasury loses the ability to issue debt on February 7th.

Treasure Secretary Jacob Lew said, "The creditworthiness of the United States is an essential underpinning of our strength as a nation; it is not a bargaining chip to be used for partisan political ends. Increasing the debt limit does not authorize new spending commitments. It simply allows the government to pay for expenditures Congress has already approved."

The Democratic position is that they will not negotiate on the debt ceiling. Call me old-fashioned, but what is there to negotiate if the money is already spent? According to an article in the *Washington Post*, Speaker John Boehner, Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and Rep. Paul Ryan are among a handful of Republicans who have threatened to fight over the debt ceiling. Rep. Ryan called for approval of the Keystone XL pipeline in exchange for a debt limit increase. What the pipeline even ostensibly has to do with the national debt is a mystery.

The *Washington Post* went on to say that Mr. Ryan made his remarks on a far-right radio talk show, so maybe Mr. Ryan and company are just saber-rattling and won't actually blow up the economy. "But the danger is that Republicans can take that too far. By most accounts, holding the debt ceiling hostage to a repeal of the health-care law was also just saber-rattling — until suddenly it wasn't. GOP politicians can only promise something to the grassroots so many times before the base demands it, and so while people like Senator Tom Coburn may be trying to pump the brakes a little bit, they're still behind the wheel of vehicle they aren't able to totally control." So says the *Post*.

RACE TO THE BOTTOM

It's a tight race, but the President and Congress are battling it out for who has the worst polling numbers of 2013.

RealClearPolitics.com averaged 14 mainstream polls right before Christmas and reported that Obama had a 42.3% approval rating. His disapproval rating was at 53.9%. Just a year ago, the numbers were reversed, with approval ratings of about 54% and disapproval ratings of 42%.

According to a CNN poll, 54% say the policies of congressional Republicans are heading the country in the wrong direction. And 54% say the same thing about the President's policies.

According to a *Washington Post* – ABC News Poll, Obama is finishing 2013 with approval ratings at an all-time low--and the lowest they've been for any president at this point in their term since Richard Nixon.

Even with all this bad news, Obama's numbers are positively envious compared to Congress'.

RealClearPolitics.com averaged seven polls and reported that Congress only has a 13.9% approval rating and an 80% disapproval rating.

Sixty-seven percent of those questioned in a CNN poll said the current Congress is the worst in their lifetime, with only 28% disagreeing.

According to CNN, "Even though the House did pass a budget agreement, fewer than 60 bills have been signed into law during the first year of the two-year-long 113th Congress." Other news organizations agree. Assuming lawmakers don't pick up the pace next year, and that's a safe bet as 2014 is an election year, this will become the least productive Congress in at least the last four decades.

Lisa Bertolino Appointed Interim Public Defender

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors appointed Lisa Bertolino as interim public defender following Michael Sheltzer's appointment by Governor Jerry Brown to serve a judgeship in Tulare County Superior Court.

Bertolino, who has served as the county's assistant public defender since 2003, has been with Tulare County since 1989. Prior to her career with the county, she was a certified public accountant.

"Based on her experience within the department, the board is confident Lisa will be able to maintain the integrity of the Public Defender's Office," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Pete Vander Poel.

Bertolino has a law degree from the Ventura College of Law and bachelor of science degree in business administration from California State University, Humboldt. She has also been a member of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission since 2001.

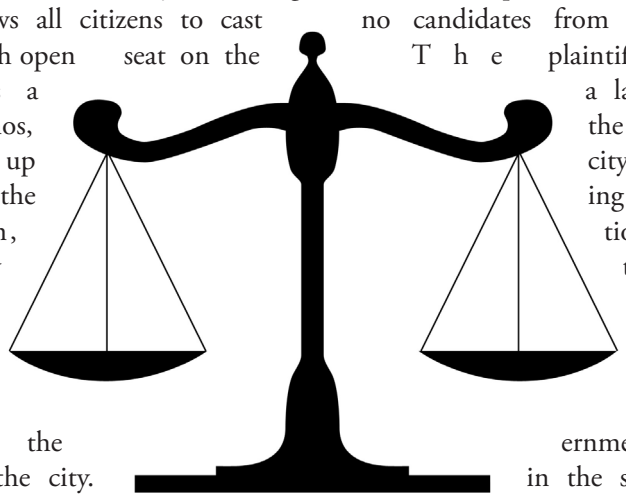
The board of supervisors officially appointed Bertolino interim public defender at its December 17 meeting.

Lawsuit Claims Visalia City Elections 'Discriminatory'

STAFF REPORTS

A group of Latino citizens and residents of Visalia filed a lawsuit in the Tulare County Superior Court on December 19th, alleging that the city of Visalia has been and is violating the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) by maintaining a discriminatory "at-large" voting system for electing its city council members.

Visalia's current off-year voting system allows all citizens to cast votes for each open seat on the council. As a result, Latinos, who make up 46 % of the population, have only been able to elect one person to the council in the history of the city.



The plaintiffs in this lawsuit are: Carlos Medina, a small businessman in Visalia; Dr. Robert Aguilar, Ed.D., superintendent of the Delano School District; Miguel Fierro, a disabled U.S. Army veteran; and Louis Montion, a former elected member of the Visalia Unified School District. The plaintiffs are represented by attorneys Marguerite Melo and John Sarsfield, of the Law Offices of Melo and Sarsfield, LLP, a civil rights law firm located in Visalia.

In 2012, the Visalia City Council created a special committee to make findings and recommendations whether the city should transition to district elections. The Election Process Task Force, as it was called, nearly unanimously recommended that district elections be adopted. It also expressed concern that the city's present voting system was illegal and discriminatory, and that it prevented qualified Latino candidates from being elected.

The plaintiffs have filed a lawsuit to have the court force the city to cease holding at-large elections, and switch to elections by-district, as is done by most major governmental entities in the state. They are also seeking to move the election from off-years (odd-numbered years) to coincide with the elections for governor or president (even-numbered years).

Numerous cities and other jurisdictions throughout California are facing and have faced similar lawsuits to force recognition of minority voting rights under the CVRA. To date, no city has prevailed against CVRA claims brought against them. An increasing number of jurisdictions are switching to district elections to avoid costly election/civil rights lawsuits.

Ralph Kaelble

Kaelble: "Louisiana Style Politics Has No Place in the Central Valley"

STAFF REPORTS

Ralph Kaelble, candidate for Tulare County District Attorney, has accused his opponent Tim Ward of "playing politics" after his wife Afreen Kaelble was recently fired from her position as a Supervising District Attorney.

Ward, the current District Attorney, is running against Ralph Kaelble in the upcoming June elections. Kaelble has earned a number of endorsements from officer's associations across the county, including the Visalia and Tulare Officer's Associations.

Afreen Kaelble served at the Tulare County D.A.'s office for 14 years without issue, Ralph Kaelble said, adding that the firing was "a severe blow to their ability to fight crime when politics won over the safety of our community."

"I always found Afreen Kaelble to be an excellent prosecutor who was concerned for the victims of crime. I was very concerned to hear that she had been forced out of the District Attorney's office because she was married to a political opponent of the appointed district attorney," Don Gallian, a retired Tulare County Assistant District Attorney, said. "The people of Tulare County are never served when politics is put ahead of public safety as the primary concern of the appointed District Attorney."

"For someone who has been given the responsibility to protect our families from crime, this action only shows that playing politics trumps what is really important," Kaelble said in a press release.

"The people of Tulare County deserve better. The Appointed D.A. must think we are in Louisiana with their long history of political corruption, rather than in Tulare County. Putting an end to this nonsense is one of the main reasons I am running for office. It has been going on for far too long."

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Emergency Operation Plan Keeps Tulare County Residents Safe

CATHERINE DOE

Will Tulare County melt into a cauldron of chaos in the event of a major catastrophe? The answer is an unqualified no -- not under the capable leadership of Andrew Lockwood and his team at the Tulare County Office of Emergency Services (OES). Lockwood is the Tulare County OES manager and has been working on the Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) since July 2011. On December 3rd, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors adopted the Tulare County Operational Area EOP.

Lockwood was asked to list the top five potential disasters that could threaten Tulare County.

"It's always the disaster that you are not expecting, the one you don't see coming," said Lockwood. For someone who prides himself on being prepared, that is a nightmare scenario. The EOP is designed to handle small local emergencies, such as a flooded highways, but could save thousands of lives during an unexpected disaster, such as a solar flare that could knock out our entire electrical grid.

Disaster experts estimate that we could go three to five days without electricity before society starts to unravel. "That's about right," said Lockwood. "Just think that without electricity there would be no pumps to supply water or gas. There would be no food and businesses and schools would be closed because no one could get anywhere without gas."

The EOP establishes how Tulare County will respond to disasters like this and how it will coordinate recovery efforts. The first priority is to save lives; the second is to protect public health and safety, followed by the protection of property and the environment.

The EOP has established a chain of command so when disaster hits, everyone knows who is in charge. That person would be the emergency services director, Jean Rousseau, whose day job is county administrative officer. If he is indisposed, it would be Mary Lindsay, assistant county administrative officer. Rousseau, Lindsay and anyone else in charge during a disaster have been appointed to their positions, not elected. Elected officials, such as our county supervisors, would take on the role of keeping their constituents informed about where to find help or shelter.

All county employees are emergency responders in the event of a disaster, and the EOP outlines their jobs and informs them where to report for duty. The EOP also coordinates between all departments such as police, fire, sheriff and volunteer organizations such as the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

"The goal of this EOP is to provide a framework for implementing an effective emergency response, cost recovery activities, maintaining essential public services and restoring normal operations following a major emergency," according to the manual.

Wide Range of Disasters Could Strike Tulare County

Tulare County is vulnerable to a wide range of potential hazards, from Tule fog to volcanic ash fallout from an eruption in the Mammoth Lake region. But it's the known potential disasters that Lockwood thinks about most often. "If a dam breaks, that's what keeps me up at night," said Lockwood. "We would have 30 minutes to get the public out of Porterville if Success Dam breaks. That's not a lot of time."

During emergencies, when the public needs immediate notification, Tulare County has developed a warning system, called AlertTC, which would alert citizens to stay indoors during a hazardous materials spill or to evacuate in the event of a severe flood. The problem is that the county only has access to landlines.

"That's not going to help if you are out grocery shopping," said Lockwood who encourages everyone to register their cell phone number or place of work with AlertTC, so they can receive emergency messages from the county. He also encourages people not to disable the government alert system. "Make sure to leave the government alerts on because Tulare County has access to their system in the case of an emergency."

Lockwood said that many people turned off their government alert system a few months ago when they received an Amber Alert about a San Diego child. He said people don't want to be bothered by far away emergencies but warned the next alert could be about a hazardous spill in your neighborhood. Lockwood said he advised those in charge of the government alert system to use it more judiciously in the future.

Who are you supposed to call in the event of an emergency? Not Rousseau the emergency services director.

"Jean only deals with the emergency personnel, not the public," said Lockwood. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, call 911. But if everyone calls 911 after an earthquake, then no one will get through. So if you do not have a life-threatening situation, the best number to call is 211. Tulare County Emergency Services has partnered with 211 to handle an overflow of calls during an emergency to direct those in need to shelters, food, water or warming centers. Another option if you need assistance is the nonemergency lines for the police and fire department.

Tulare County is prone to flooding.

The EOP was activated in August when lightning struck a Southern California Edison substation in Visalia causing a fire and a nearly countywide blackout. The EOP established who was in charge and brought agencies together to implement a coordinated response. Lockwood was the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) director for the county and Visalia City Manager Steve Salomon was the EOC director for the City of Visalia. No other EOCs were activated. Everything went so smoothly the effects of the emergency were almost completely mitigated and everything was back to normal in 24 hours.

All emergencies are categorized as low, mid or high level depending on their severity. The fire did enough damage to cause a power failure throughout most of the county. But SoCal Edison had an assessment in about 20 minutes and knew they could get power restored sometime that night, making the incident a low level emergency. Nevertheless, an Emergency Operations Center was set up and the medical and health branch of the EOP was activated along with the Fire Department branch.

With a power outage, those in a vulnerable state of health are in the most danger. The discovery that 125 patients' ventilators were not working properly was the biggest challenge facing Lockwood during the fire. Relocating so many people on ventilators is tricky; finding a location with reliable electricity was even trickier. But because the medical branch of the EOP was functioning, they were prepared and no one suffered any ill effects in the move.

The EOP also categorizes emergencies into high frequency or low frequency occurrences. Earthquakes and tornados are very unlikely to strike in Tulare County, but their impact would be huge, so the EOP has to be prepared. But the most likely disaster to hit Tulare County is severe weather.

"Climate change is creating a new normal and severe weather is becoming the new normal," said Lockwood. He said that within our lifetime, the nation's GDP could be consumed by the cost of weather disasters if there weren't EOPs in place.

One of the most dangerous disasters facing Tulare County that would be placed in the high frequency category is a hazardous material spill. High frequency means that it will probably happen in our lifetime, unlike a volcanic eruption, which probably won't happen in our lifetime. Industrial, manufacturing and agriculture industries are all big chemical users and are all present in Tulare County. So are the hospitals. The state is also using Highway 99 to transport hazardous materials to the Kettleman City hazardous material disposal site. "That's a disaster not a lot of people have thought about. You just don't want to know what is in most of those trucks driving next to you on Highway 99," said Lockwood.

At the December 3rd meeting, after Lockwood finished his presentation, Supervisor Allan Ishida expressed concern over the possibility of San Francisco and Los Angeles being hit with huge disasters. "We are not prepared if 100,000 people show up," he said. Although the first place refugees would settle if they had to evacuate the Bay Area or Los Angeles, would be Bakersfield or Modesto, the state may decide to put 20,000 refugees in Visalia. "The federal government placed Katrina refugees here and some of them stayed," said Lockwood. Tulare County did not have a say in the matter.

In the case of a huge influx of refugees, the EOP has designated Mass Care Shelter Sites. Their first choice is the International Agriculture Center, but this facility is private so the OES needs to work out an agreement with them. The other options are the Tulare County Fair Grounds -- which were also used as a way station during the Japanese internment -- the Visalia Convention Center and local stadiums.

Now that we have an Emergency Operations Plan, does anyone know how to use it?

"We are shooting for January 2014 to start training our first line of defense, the police and fire chiefs and city managers," said Lockwood.

'The Mono Lakes - Long Valley Area is an Active Volcanic Region of California'

On December 3rd Tulare County Supervisors adopted the Emergency Operations Plan, but according to Andrew Lockwood, manager of the Office of Emergency Services, what they approved was an umbrella plan on how to organize a structural response and assign roles and responsibilities in the event of any disaster. There are an additional 30-plus binders, above and beyond what the supervisors approved, which address how to respond to specific disasters and their recovery.

The following is an excerpt from one of those binders, the Tulare County Hazard Mitigation Plan:

"Eruptions have occurred in the Inyo and Mono craters as recently as 600 years ago, and small eruptions have occurred in Mono Lake between the mid 1700s and mid 1800s. Although no volcanic eruptions are known to have occurred in eastern California since those in Mono Lake, the volcanic system in the Mammoth Lakes/Long Valley area is still active.

"The nearest volcanoes to Tulare County are located about 60 miles northeast of the county border in the Mammoth Lakes/Long Valley area within Mono County. The Long Valley Caldera is located in this area; the Caldera is a depression that was created 760,000 years ago when a large volcanic eruption destroyed the existing volcano. Over time, other volcanic features developed in the caldera area, including Mammoth Mountain and the Mono and Inyo Craters. Mammoth Mountain is a composite volcano that extruded along the southwest rim of the Long Valley Caldera approximately 220,000 to 50,000 years ago. The Mono and Inyo craters were formed by more recent eruptions 5,000 to 500 years ago. This younger volcanic chain extends from south of Mammoth Mountain on the western caldera to the north shore of Mono Lake.

"If an eruption were to occur in the Long Valley Caldera area, its impact will depend on the size of the eruption, location and type of eruption. Impacts will also depend on the wind direction and the time of the year the eruption occurs. For example, an eruption during the winter months could melt heavy snow and generate mudflows. In the Long Valley area, significantly destructive flooding could occur. Areas in the opposite direction of the wind will experience less volcanic ash deposition.

"The most serious effect on Tulare County would be ash deposition, if the wind direction were occurring in such a way to bring ash towards Tulare County. Airborne volcanic ash may be carried hundreds of miles downwind, possible impacting homes and agricultural fields in Tulare County, which is located approximately 80 miles from the Long Valley area. More-violent volcanic hazards, such as pyroclastic flows, are not expected to affect Tulare County. According to USGS, even the main population centers in the Long Valley area are far enough from the probable eruption sites that they are unlikely to be direction impacted by the flows."

Child Find Project Seeks Children Needing Special Services

STAFF REPORTS

The Child Find Project is designed to identify children who may be in need of special education services and connect them with appropriate educational programs. Through the program, parents or friends who believe that a child may have a mental or physical disability can obtain assistance from the Tulare County Office of Education or their local school district.

Special education services and programs are available in Tulare County for children with disabilities from birth through 21 years of age. Services are available for children with disabilities in speech, sight or hearing, orthopedic or other health impairments, learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder or behavior disorders, as well as those who are developmentally disabled.

The goal of the Child Find Project is to ensure that every child in Tulare County attends school and receives appropriate services. Child Find accepts referrals and screens children who may have a disability. The child is then referred to an appropriate educational program for evaluation and/or services. Assessments are provided at no cost to parents. Information is confidential and the privacy of children and parents is protected.

"The Child Find Project is an excellent way of notifying parents of exemplary services and compassionate people who are here to help children with disabilities," said Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak.

Additional information regarding special education services and programs may be obtained by calling 730-2910, ext. 5120.

U.S. Flags at Half-Staff at Tulare County Buildings to Honor Deputy Meyst

Tulare County Board of Supervisors Chairman Pete Vander Poel requested United States flags be flown at half-staff at all Tulare County buildings in remembrance of Tulare County Sheriff's Deputy Jeremy Meyst.

"Our thoughts are prayers go out to the family of Jeremy Meyst and all the families who have lost young men who died serving our county," Vander Poel said. "Tulare County will fly our flags at half-staff and encourage individuals, businesses and other organizations to join us in remembrance of Jeremy Meyst for his sacrifice."

He added that flags would be flown at half-staff until the date of Meyst's services.

According to the Tulare County Sheriff's Department, Meyst, while on duty on Christmas Eve, was involved in a single vehicle traffic accident while transporting two inmates from the Porterville Substation to the Main Jail in Visalia. Deputy Meyst was a nine-year veteran of the Sheriff's Department.

CrisCom Company President/CEO Charles "Chuck" Jelloian (right) presents Ruiz Foods founder Fred Ruiz (left) with the 2013 Leader for America award.

Fred Ruiz Receives 'Leader for America' Award

STAFF REPORTS

The CrisCom Company presented its "Leader for America" award to Ruiz Foods founder Fred Ruiz for his dedication and commitment to the youth in our community. Ruiz was honored at a reception at the CrisCom Company's Central Valley Headquarters on December 16.

In 1964, Fred and his father, Louis F. Ruiz, started Ruiz Foods to sell frozen Mexican foods based on the recipes of Fred's mother, "Grandma Rosie." With a strong passion for community involvement, volunteerism and giving, Ruiz Foods and its team members founded Ruiz 4 Kids in 1991. The nonprofit organization enhances the lives of children and youth in the company's surrounding communities, supporting education and programs that serve their critical needs.

"Each year, Ruiz Foods generously supports numerous organizations in the Central Valley that focus on improving the lives of children through arts, health, sports, recreation and education," said Charles "Chuck" Jelloian, CrisCom Company president and CEO. "Truly, Mr. Ruiz is a well deserving recipient, not only for his entrepreneurial success in building a national company from humble beginnings, but also because of his philanthropic work."

Ruiz 4 Kids has awarded millions of dollars in scholarships, and has provided opportunities that inspire hope and change in children's lives locally and nationally.

In 1983, as demand grew for the Ruiz Foods products, the U.S. Small Business Administration recognized the company's hard work, dedication and innovative business practices. That year, Fred and his father were presented with the United States Small Business Persons of the Year award by President Ronald Reagan in the Rose Garden of the White House. The company was later inducted into the United States Small Business Administration Hall of Fame in Washington, D.C.

Established in 1997, The CrisCom Company is a nationwide governmental affairs, business development and public relations firm with corporate headquarters located in Chatsworth.

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$8.6 Million Solar Project Ready to Start Construction in Farmersville

STEVE PASTIS

Construction on a new $8.6 million solar project in Farmersville could begin as early as this month.

"We've been approved by the city of Farmersville Planning Commission and expect to start construction by the end of January," said Don Watson, president of ImMODO Energy Services Corporation in Visalia.

The future site of ImMODO's Farmersville solar project

"It was great working with the city of Farmersville," he added, describing the process as "smooth."

The site is currently a 19-acre dirt lot located at the west end of Terry Avenue in the northern part of Farmersville.

"It's a good strategic location and in the middle of the Visalia and Farmersville area," Watson said. "It's close to where people will use the electricity."

The power generated by the project will serve the needs of about 1,000 households in Tulare County, according to Watson. The project will also bring jobs to the area.

"On a project like this, during the construction the payroll is $300,000 just to employees," said Michael Washam, county economic development manager, comparing it to a similarly sized project in Tulare. He added that another $600,000 would likely go to local subcontractors who do work such as fabricating the metal framing for the solar panels.

Construction usually takes between two to three months to complete, according to Hector Uriarte, green jobs coordinator at Proteus, Inc. in Visalia, which has been training and placing workers in solar projects in Tulare County.

"We also have a lot of demand in Kern County where they are asking for solar installers," he said, noting that the majority of solar construction in the Valley is in Tulare and Kern counties. "We're very fortunate to have that here in Tulare County."

But how fortunate is Farmersville to have this large project?

There are property taxes on the site, but "because it's a clean energy project, other than the assessed property value, there's no other revenue," said Farmersville City Manager Mario Krstic.

"One of the advantages is that it's on property where currently nothing takes place," he said, adding that the property has no agricultural value and "had no other industrial use. It does fill the space and provide a renewable energy source."

And although most of the jobs offered by the project are in its construction and as a result are temporary, "They've been committed to hiring as many local folks as they can," Krstic said. "But once the plants are installed, they pretty much sit there and do their thing."

The solar energy industry is a rapidly growing business in the South Valley and that may eventually have additional benefits for the city of Farmersville.

"We've been talking to Farmersville High School," Watson said, adding that solar career opportunities will be posted on a kiosk on campus. "It will help explain what solar is and what the jobs in the solar energy are like."

USDA California Rural Development Single Family Housing Program Director Ron Tackett joins 11 families in front of one of the homes they jointly built in Reedley.

Self-Help Enterprises Helps 11 Families Build Homes for the Holidays

SARAH MARQUART

The holidays were extra special this year for 11 families in Reedley, who received the keys to their homes during a celebration ceremony December 19. The group spent nearly 10 months building each other's homes, developed by Visalia-based Self-Help Enterprises and funded through USDA's Mutual Self-Help Housing Loan program.

The rules of the program are simple, though not necessarily easy. Ten to 12 families are grouped together to pool their efforts. Each family is required to put in a minimum of 40 hours a week working on all the homes and no one moves in until every home is completed. Together, families pour foundations, frame homes, install electrical wiring, hang doors and windows and even lay tile and paint. Their labor – "sweat equity" – acts as a down payment for the home, and USDA Rural Development provides the families with mortgages through the Single Family Housing Direct Loan Program.

Many participants also have full-time jobs, so much of the work was done at night and on weekends. The more hours the families put it, the faster the homes are built, and everyone wanted to be finished in time for Christmas.

"It's like working a double-shift every day," said Robert Tapia, a single father of two. "You work at your job all day and then come out to the site to work. Even though we have Sundays and Mondays off, almost everyone still came out to work those days, too."

Through this program, families who never thought it possible have finally realized the dream of home ownership. But the rewards are not without sacrifice. "When my mother passed away earlier this year, I wasn't able to go to Mexico to the funeral," said Ignacio Gordillo who, along with his wife, Maria, is building a home for their family of seven. "It was really hard, but we had to work on the house. It was a choice we had to make."

This was also a very special day for USDA's partner, Self-Help Enterprises, the Visalia-based nonprofit housing organization that developed the homes. Self-Help Enterprises pioneered the mutual self-help model, building the first self-help homes in the nation. With the completion of these homes, they reached the remarkable milestone of 6,000 homes built since they started in 1965.

"It's hard to wrap your head around that number," said Tom Collishaw, vice-president of Self-Help Enterprises. "But no matter how many homes we help build, every home, every family is as important as the last, and as special as the first. We're looking forward to 6,000 more."

Sarah Marquart is a public affairs specialist with USDA Rural Development.

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Dinuba

Continued from p. 1

each month that he has been getting for a number of years as a part-time city employee serving on the council. He said he receives no health benefits through his employment with the city.

Smith has worked for over 20 years as a construction salesman at a private corporation not connected with the city he serves as a council member. With 13 years on the council, Smith is far and away the most veteran member of the city's five-person council.

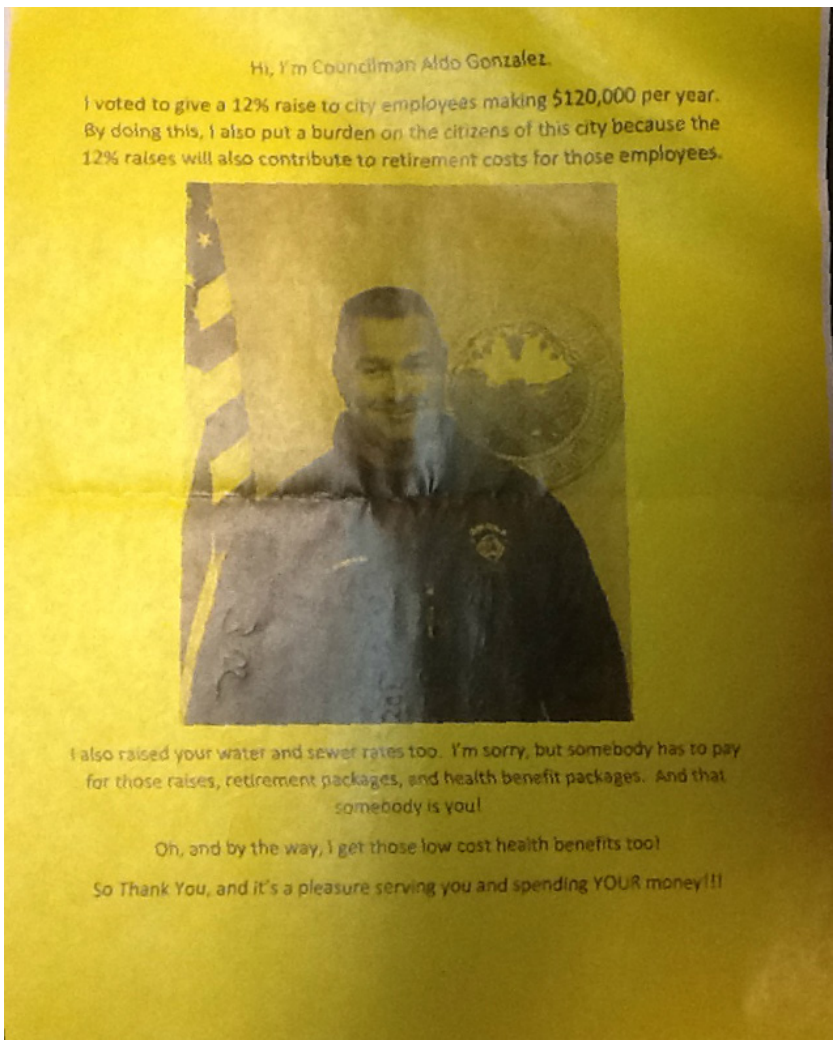
He has attempted several face-to-face discussions with the group in order to convince them to come to the table for a civilized discussion of their concerns, but they repeatedly refuse to talk with him or to state clearly or coherently what their concerns are.

Smith said he refuses to stress over any eventual outcome of the recall drive, which he has no control over, and "if anybody has any legitimate concerns about the way I carry out my duties on the council, they have every right to voice them publically in a civilized manner, but not the way that members of Citizens for Dinuba is going around spreading lies and intimidating city residents in an attempt to persuade them to sign the petitions." Smith ran unopposed in his past two council elections.

The founder of Grassroots – Citizens for Dinuba spoke with the Valley Voice about his reasons for forming the group and masterminding the current recall drive.

Robert Cervantes, who gives his occupation as a real estate investor, moved to Dinuba from the Bay Area in 2003 and "immediately started noticing injustices going on here," he said. He alleges instances where city property was sold in secret deals to family members, letters sent out by the city in English-only to the city residents, of whom 85% are of Hispanic heritage, and according to Cervantes, two-thirds of them speak no English. Large pay raises (4% annually in each of three consecutive years) were given to the council members themselves as well as to city employees making over $100,000 annually, along with lifetime health benefits packages Cervantes claims. He said that the city purchased property from a former golf course at $15,000 per acre and was now selling off parcels in a hush-hush deal to a developer at less than what the city paid.

The developer dealing with the city has refused to divulge who his investors are, Cervantes claims, insinuating that city employees are likely among that group. Cervantes said the local daily newspaper, the *Dinuba Sentinel*, is biased in its coverage of local news in favor of the council and won't print anything about council wrongdoing.



A flyer created by the group "Grassroots — Citizens for Dinuba"

Council Member Aldo Gonzalez, in his first term on the council, was shocked when a flyer began circulating with his picture on it that had been lifted from the city's website. Text surrounding his picture was in the form of a letter informing the public that he (Gonzalez) had voted for sizable pay raises and expensive health benefits packages for city employees, along with utility tax increases for residents throughout the city, and through the letter on the flyer was letting the citizens of Dinuba know what he had done in light of the fact that the citizens would be paying off the heavy financial burden for his actions long into the future.

The picture was his, Gonzales said, but he had no personal knowledge at all as to the origin of the flyer and its contents. He did not give anyone permission to use his likeness for their own purposes, he said.

"I'm not into name calling, finger pointing, or none of that stuff," Gonzales said with a frown, "and I'm very concerned with the direction this whole thing seems to be heading."

When contacted for his response to questions concerning the origin of the mysterious flyer, Cervantes readily acknowledged responsibility for the flyer and its contents. The picture of Gonzales, he explained, was on the city's website and therefore in the public domain and a legitimate tool for his purposes.

The text on the flyer, Cervantes explained, was merely a recounting of Gonzales' actions that Cervantes knew him to be guilty of. Thus, according to Cervantes, the text should be properly viewed as a confession and apology from Cervantes to the residents of Dinuba, despite the fact that Gonzales had taken no part in the flyer or its contents. Cervantes said that he felt in light of these circumstances that what he had done (to Gonzales, as well as deliberately misleading whoever read the flyer)was completely justifiable under the circumstances.

Mayor Janet Hinesly, winding down her four-year term on the council, is up for reelection in November, as is Gonzales, as his own initial stint on the council faces a termed end, should he survive the current recall effort. Hinesly has served as mayor for the past two years, having been elected to the post by her fellow council members.

She is proud of the council's careful fiscal stewardship that somehow managed to steer the city through the financial tempest of the recession years and emerge into a slowly strengthening economy. The city, says Hinesly, is its best fiscal shape than at any other time in the past 25 years.

"It is hard for me to understand the accusations that are being thrown around so harshly," said Hinesly reflectively, "There is simply just no reason for them to be so dissatisfied with the way we have handled things for the city. We're in much better, sound fiscal shape than so many of the surrounding communities."

Hinesly has received threatening, anonymous calls at odd hours, with a voice warning her to "watch your back" and "we're going to run you out of town."

Hinesly, whose husband, Jim, recently retired as a sheriff's captain after a long career in the sheriff's office, said that the two of them had long planned for retirement years spent traveling around and taking life easy in their motor home.

"But this vicious recall, and the threatening phone calls intended to scare me and somehow get me to run…that's getting my dander up a bit," she said. "And it's causing me to think a little deeper, like maybe I don't want to run, or to let them scare me away.

"I might even give it some more thought and maybe decide to run for re-election," Hinesly said with a wide smile on her face, her brow furrowed in thought.

Hinesly's district, the smallest of the three engaged in the recall effort, has only 962 registered voters. The verifiable, valid signatures of 30%, or 289 of those registered voters must be turned in by the deadline.

Mike Smith has 1,539 registered voters and 25%, or 385 valid signatures, must be turned in by the deadline of Jan. 13.

District 4 representative Aldo Gonzales has 1,496 registered voters among his constituents and 25% of their valid signatures, or 374, will need to accompany the petition against him when it is submitted no later than January 13.

The Valley Voice will continue close coverage of the recall election in Dinuba as it continues to unfold in the small, pleasant community on our county's northern fringe.

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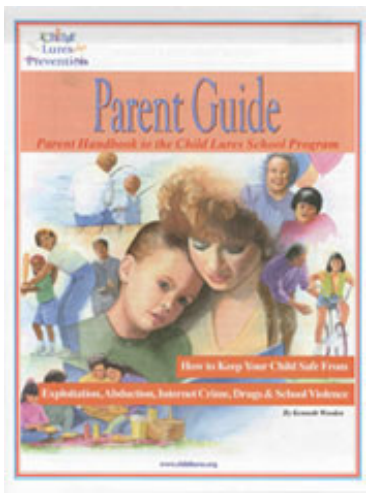
TCOE to Make Child Lures Prevention Program Parent Guides Available

STAFF REPORTS

Tulare County Superintendent of Schools, Jim Vidak announced that Child Lures Prevention Program Parent Guides are available to interested staff, their families and community members.

Written by nationally recognized author and child abduction expert, Ken Wooden, the guides are designed to teach parents and children how to recognize and thwart frequently used child abduction "lures."

The Child Lures Prevention Program was founded in 1984 by Wooden and his family and teaches life skills to protect children and youth from sexual exploitation, abduction, Internet crime, drugs and school violence. It provides an understanding of the specific lures used in these crimes and teaches proven prevention strategies so children can readily take steps to remove themselves from potentially dangerous situations.



An integral part of the program is a 20-page illustrated Child Lures Parent Guide that Wooden believes is the definitive guide for keeping youngsters safe from sexual exploitation, abduction, Internet crime, drugs and school violence.

The guide includes detailed explanations of the 16 lures commonly used by child molesters and abductors, prevention strategies, tips for keeping children safe, ways to explain the concept of law to children, categories of missing children and steps to take if your child is missing.

"Tulare County Office of Education has a long-standing relationship with Ken Wooden," explains Vidak. "Children and their safety are top priorities for us. We're fortunate to have Ken Wooden, the Child Lures Prevention Program and associated resources available to us to teach our children and parents how to recognize and avoid frequently used abduction lures."

The Child Lures Prevention Parent Guide is available free-of-charge to TCOE staff, families and community members. Call 733-6300 or visit the front reception area of the main office of the Tulare County Office of Education at 2637 W. Burrel Ave. in Visalia for a copy. Supplies are limited.

Trade Pact

Continued from p. 1

is to eliminate sanitary and phytosanitary barriers (SPS), which are exclusions based on food-safety claims that often have little scientific justification.

The EU is the number one export market for California almonds and walnuts, and the number two market for our pistachios. Cancelling lingering tariffs on those products is just one of many benefits California growers will gain from TTIP. Consider this: total agriculture imports into the EU jumped 145 percent over the last decade, and total U.S. agriculture exports grew 176 percent, yet U.S. agriculture exports to the EU grew only 54 percent. Tearing down trade barriers via TTIP would throw Europe's door wide open to U.S. farmers, allowing them to compete on an even footing in one of the world's biggest markets for food. TPP and TTIP will be "WTO-plus" agreements that surpass traditional WTO commitments. Imposing tough enforcement measures based on sound science, they will create a new standard of free and fair trade among countries comprising around 65 percent of world GDP.

There are still challenges ahead in negotiating these deals, and their prospects for approval would improve with more direct engagement by President Obama. But there is strong bipartisan support for them, since they will benefit the entire nation.

In the San Joaquin Valley, the less water we have, the less we'll gain from these agreements. Nevertheless, these pacts are a chance to further improve one of the few bright spots on the economic landscape – California agriculture exports have jumped from $6.5 billion in 2001 to $16.9 billion in 2011. TPP and TTIP will permanently open even more vital markets to American farmers, creating new, reliable customers for the full range of U.S. agricultural goods.

Having been beaten down by regulations promulgated by those with little understanding of agriculture, our farmers finally have some big opportunities to improve their own fortunes. That's all they're asking for, and in return for feeding us, it's the least they deserve.

The local dairy industry, as pictured in this historic photo from the 2014 Tulare County Community Calendar published by Central Valley Community Bank, would benefit from the proposed trade pacts.

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Cats

Continued from p. 1

Services and the decision makers at County do not believe TNR works.

I asked Austin her personal opinion on TNR. She said no one's personal opinion is relevant in the case of TNR. "If you look online you will find plenty of information and data supporting the program. TNR has been around for a long time."

Austin said that as long as she has lived here, Mooney Grove has had cats. "There is a residential area and Big Bubba's Barbeque restaurant. If you don't try to get the colonies stabilized more cats are going to show up."

I told her that those in charge at Mooney Grove don't believe that TNR works. "I don't know where County gets their information. I haven't seen anything that would support their opinion. Statistics-wise, that's just not the case."

I asked the likelihood of finding homes for abandoned and feral adult cats. "Abandoned cats revert to the behavior of the cats they are with and quickly learn not to trust people. It's not impossible to adopt them out, but it is a challenge," she said. "The ideal thing is to put the cat back in its original colony where it knows it as home."

> *"I don't think people have to be cat lovers to look at the data and see that TNR works. COS wants the problem solved. They have other things to do."*
>
> *— Steve Surowiec*

Alley Cat Allies, one of the founders of the TNR Program, states, "Feral cats have a home – outdoors! And although they appreciate a can of cat food, they don't want to snuggle with you on your couch."

TULARE COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL PREPARES TO RECEIVE MOONEY CATS

According to Supervisor Phil Cox and Assistant County Administrative Officer Mary Lindsay, the decision has been made to rid the park of cats and find them warm, loving homes. To do this they have suggested "Adopt a Mooney Grove Cat Day" and to post signs warning pet owners that it is against the law to dump animals in the park.

Back at ground zero where the Mooney cats would land, TC Animal Control neither has the facility nor the cages to handle approximately 100 stray cats. Tim Lutz, Health and Human Services manager, has just begun the process of preparing staff to handle the special needs of Mooney Grove's cats and implement the county's plan. They have been getting themselves ready by working with animal advocacy groups such as Petco, Shelters and Dr. Kuswa of Companion Animal Medical Center. "Right now we are at the point of looking for a solution. This is the direction we are heading." said Lutz.

Cox and Lindsay refer to the cats as abandoned pets, but Lutz said some were abandoned but most are feral. Part of their preparation will be finding a feral cat rescue facility because feral cats are not adoptable. TC Animal Control is looking outside the county because such a facility does not exist here. I suggested they just leave the feral cats at Mooney Grove, but Lutz said TC Animal Control has to continue the process of implementing the county's plan.

Surowiec seriously doubts the wisdom of removing all the cats from Mooney Grove. "It would be more of a public safety issue at the park to have a growing colony of unneutered feral cats than a small colony of healthy cats." A long time ago, he said, cat removal was SPCA policy, until they noticed it didn't work and they had to find a new way.

Lutz and his staff are facing three large challenges at Tulare County Animal Control that were not of their making.

One, there has not been effective coordination of strategies nor communication between the county administration and Tulare County Animal Control.

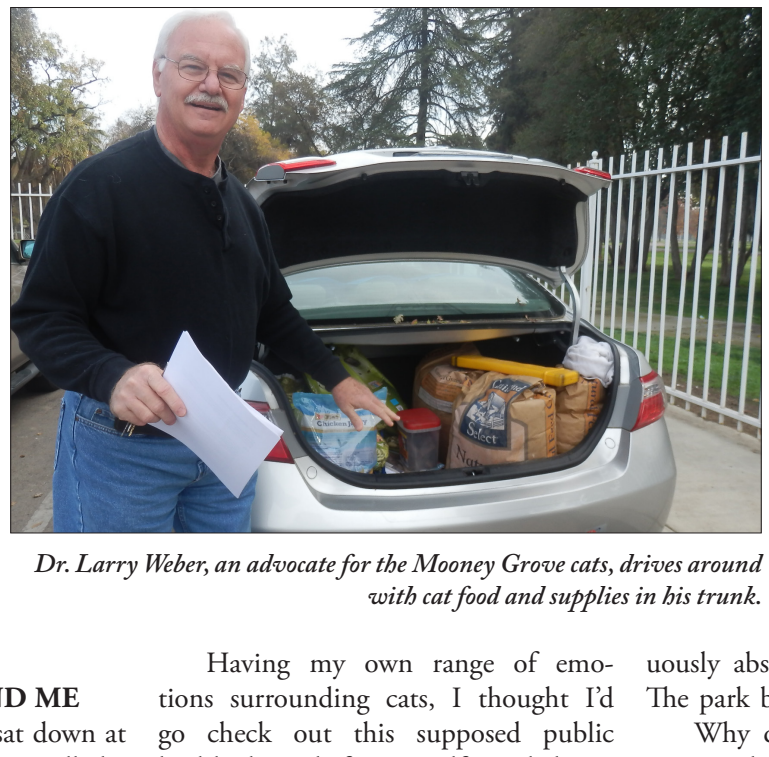
Two, the Tulare County Administrative office gave their word, then broke it, that they would not trap cats at Mooney Grove while the details of the TNR Program were being worked out. The following is an August 12th email from John Hess, administrative analyst for the Tulare County Administrative Office.

"Thank you for bringing this to our attention," said Hess. "We will continue to work with parks staff to ensure that trapping activities are put on hold until this matter has been resolved. Additionally, any animals trapped at the park are taken to Tulare County Animal Control near Ave 256 and Rd 140."

Third, the longtime, and well respected, head of Animal Control, Paul Grenseman, has mysteriously disappeared. The volunteers feeding the cats at the park saw Paul as very approachable and sympathetic to the fate of Mooney Grove's cats. He promised to let the volunteers know if a Mooney Grove cat showed up at Animal Control with a notched ear. Not only has no reason been given for Grensemen's sudden absence, those answering the phone at animal control don't even admit he is not there, and are still taking his messages. The following is a voicemail he left for a cat advocate Monday, August 12th.

"This is Paul Grunseman, Tulare County Animal Control manager. I checked everything out with Mary and I'm sad to say I found out some disturbing news here. And, um, we've had a meeting and, uh, I've talked to Dr. Duerksen so I just wanted to go over the details with you. Uh, we run an honest and above-board operation here and, uh, and, uh, there were some things happening that, uh, that, uh, I wasn't unaware of but I'm fixing it. Anyway, look forward to speaking with you and have a nice day. Bye."

This begs the question: is something fishy going on with animal control?



Dr. Larry Weber, an advocate for the Mooney Grove cats, drives around with cat food and supplies in his trunk.

MOONEY GROVE AND ME

Full disclosure: My son sat down at the kitchen table and tallied up all the cats that have come into our family's life since 1999. The number is 26, which on first glance seems like a lot, but we live in the middle of 94 acres of citrus trees. I won't say that we kept the coyote population well fed because that would be too crass, but we are now down to six cats, and only one has died of natural causes.

Some were abandoned pets, adopted from the pound, unwanted kittens or born right here in our house. The worst was a "rehabilitated" feral kitten my husband found while gardening at a commercial building. We called her Echo, because all five inches of her managed to escape the grasp of my 250 pound, rugby player son. "She hissed at me," he whimpered. She spent the next two days hiding in our Toyota Echo until we finally pulled her out from under the passenger seat.

Echo became the worst pet in the history of pets.

Somehow Echo beat the odds of being hit by a car, eaten by a coyote, or bitten by a rattler and made it to adulthood. She mostly lived in the rafters of our carport and slinked inside to hiss at whoever opened the door and grab a bite to eat. One day, suffering from some sort of skin infection, Echo slipped away to die in peace.

One of Mooney Grove's cats bathes itself indifferent to the controversy.

I don't know who was more surprised, the cat or me, but she didn't die. Echo crawled out of her hiding spot no more than a head connected to a pile of bones and managed to drink some water. Each day, she made it ten more feet until she dragged herself up the stairs to our front porch. When she finally decided that it wasn't the humans who tried to kill her, she came inside the house and never left the food bowl. Soon her stomach almost dragged to the floor and she had three chins.

Echo eventually reverted back to her daily activities and normal weight. She could hunt like a lioness and I looked at her in awe. She looked at me with disdain. Then completely out of the blue, she ventured beyond her cat bowl and sauntered into the family room and began to roll around on the floor. She jumped on my husband's lap, kneaded his belly, and rubbed her face against his. After going through eight of her nine lives, Echo, the feral kitten, became a house pet. proudly, "that's the only trick I was able to teach him--how to kiss." Charming.

All this "wild" life but nary a cat to feed. Two or three lurked in the distance and sized me up for my usefulness, which they deemed little to none. One cat ever so slightly smiled at me just to let me know that the poop I had accidently put my blanket on was his. Soon I was yesterday's news and they did what every cat does best – looked at me condescendingly then leaned to one side and licked its ass. Then it was gone.

Some Mooney cats may be abandoned pets but they now have the characteristics of feral cats. Unless you have a can of cat food in your hand, and even then maybe not, these are not social cats. Because the cats kept their distance, when I took pictures I had to zoom in as much as my camera would allow. Scrolling through my images later that day, I could see that what I really took pictures of was a lot of rust, peeling paint and an amazing amount of disrepair.

As Cox said, the park is for the people, not cats, but besides the Tulare County Museum, it's hardly fit for either.

I first noticed all the dilapidation when I met Dr. Larry Weber at the park the day after Thanksgiving. But the pictures were shocking. This is not the Mooney Grove I grew up with. This was depressing. Just think of all the maintenance the staff could do with the time and money spent on trapping 100 cats. Also, who knows the cost of expanding TC Animal Control's facility to handle those cats, buy at least 50 new cages, and then possibly transport them to a feral cat facility; all while the problem could be handled better, and for free. Then we get to do it all over again when new cats repopulate Mooney Grove.

The cats actually have brought a lot of joy to park regulars who have seen them grow up from kittens to taking their place in their colonies. The joy the cats have brought to people using the park has been conspicuously absent from this entire debate. The park belongs to animal lovers also.

Why does the top brass of Tulare County think they know better than the Valley Oak SPCA, veterinaries, the National Pet Alliance, Ally Cat Allies, Love of Animals, and all other animal groups? By implementing their plan, Mooney Grove cats aren't going to live happily ever after like Echo. Despite their hope to find loving homes, many of these cats are going to be put down, and it's going to cost us tax payers megabucks.

Having my own range of emotions surrounding cats, I thought I'd go check out this supposed public health hazard for myself, and bring a picnic to Mooney Grove Park.

I picked out a space by the cat bridge colony and laid my blanket out on the grass. No sooner had I set out my food when a bird crapped in my hair. The geese then lined up like a firing squad and stared me down with one big eye fixed on my hard cheddar cheese. Then some old lady's dog, on too long of a leash, walked right over my blanket and licked me on the face–twice–because, as she said

Continued on p. 11 »

Cats

Continued from p. 10

During one of my many interviews for this series, someone would know said, "I have found cat people to be very different."

Truer words were never spoken. Cat advocates are not county employees hired for their interpersonal skills or ability to effectively articulate sensitive issues. They are private citizens who drive around town with metal tins and bags of cat food in their trunks. They take time almost every day to feed abandoned and feral cats in a public park. What did the county expect when someone, who actually was hired for her interpersonal skills, trapped two nursing mother cats along with a few kittens that ended up getting put down? This, after they promised to discontinue trapping until the matter was resolved.

So an impassioned cat advocate loses her cool and makes threats to a county employee, an employee, by the way, who has a history of confrontation herself. What's the county's point? They should have put their big boy pants on, apologized, and continued developing the TNR Program. They also should have disciplined the employee who disobeyed her boss.

When I asked Surowiec where he thought the county was coming from he responded, "I have no idea why county is not for TNR. Maybe it's just about being educated about the process. I'm doing it to prevent suffering."

Phony Job Posting Lures Valley Resident

DANIEL GIBBY, BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU

A Fresno resident searching for employment was a recent victim of scammers that use phony job postings to lure in potential candidates. The posting was displayed on a large employment website, where an increasing number of job hunters turn to post their resume and search for jobs.

Victor, the victim, sent a resume to the phony job posting in hopes of finding a job. Soon after, the scammer contacted Victor and offered him the job. His first task as an employee was "to help the phony company establish a new office location in Fresno." The company communicated they would cover the cost associated with the project by mailing him a cashier's check.

Once Victor received the cashier's check, he grew very skeptical about the company, so he called a large bank to verify the legitimacy of the check. After the check cleared Victor's bank account, he followed the instructions given by the scammers and wired the money to an entity in the United Kingdom. He was also instructed to hold onto a fraction of the money to cover expenses to establish the new office location.

Sometime later, Victor was notified by his bank that his account was overdrawn. He then realized that the check was a fake and he was out the money he wired to the scammers.

Victor told his parents of the incident and they immediately decided to consult the Central California and Inland Empire Better Business Bureau. Victor's parents are local business owners and are also accredited with the BBB. Victor and his parents met one-on-one with BBB staff members, and were relieved to receive guidance on how to handle such a problematic situation.

The Better Business Bureau advises job hunters to be on the lookout for these red flags when conducting their job search:

- Emails purporting to be from job posting websites claiming there's a problem with a job hunter's account. After creating a user account on sites like Monster.com, Careerbuilder.com or Craigslist.com, a job hunter might receive an e-mail saying there has been a problem with their account or they need to follow a hyperlink to install new software. Phishing e-mails like this are designed to convince readers to click a link within the message to fix the issue, but actually take them to a website that will install malware or viruses on their computer.
- An employer asks for extensive personal information such as Social Security or bank account numbers. Some job seekers have been surprised to learn they've gotten a job without having to do a single interview. However, when the employer then asked for personal information in order to fill out the necessary paperwork suspicions were raised - and rightly so. Regardless of the reason or excuse given by the employer, a job applicant should never give out his or her Social Security or bank account numbers over the phone or e-mail.
- An employer asks for money upfront. Aside from paying for a uniform, it is rarely advisable for an applicant to pay upfront fees or make a required purchase to get a job. Most recently, the BBB of Metropolitan Dallas uncovered a scam where job hunters were told they had to pay $64.50 for a background check before they could be considered for a cleaning job. Predictably, after paying for the background check, the job seeker never heard from the company again.
- The job requires the employee to wire money through Western Union or MoneyGram. Many phony jobs require the prospective employee to cash a check sent by the company through the mail and then wire a portion of the money on to another entity. Reasons given for this requirement vary from scam to scam. Whatever the reason though, the check might clear the employee's bank account but will eventually turn out to be a fake and the employee is out the money he or she wired back to the scammers.

For more information, visit cencal.bbb.org or call 1-800-675-8118, ext. 5, to talk with BBB staff at the Central California and Inland Empire office.

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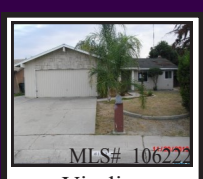

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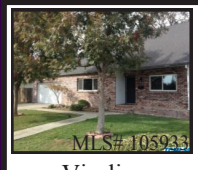

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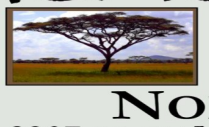

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Sequoia Riverlands Trust Earns Accreditation

STAFF REPORTS

Following a rigorous evaluation, Sequoia Riverlands Trust (SRT) has been awarded accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. SRT is among just 11 such land trusts nationally to receive this recognition in the current round, and nationally among just over 200 total LTA-accredited land trusts.

"Sequoia Riverlands Trust has earned the public trust in our area over many years," said Soapy Mulholland, executive director of SRT. "But it is especially gratifying to earn Land Trust Alliance accreditation because it underscores that our many supporters' longstanding trust is well-placed."

The Dry Creek Preserve is one of six such Central California lands owned and conserved by the Visalia-based Sequoia Riverlands Trust with more than 13,000 acres under management. (Photo Copyright 2013 by John Greening)

Each accredited land trust must submit extensive documentation and undergo an exhaustive review.

"Through accreditation, land trusts conduct important planning and make their operations more efficient and strategic," said Tammara Van Ryn, executive director of the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, which operates under the auspices of the Land Trust Alliance, based in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Adam Livingston, Berkeley-based SRT director of planning, echoes her thoughts. "Applying for accreditation involved a thorough review of SRT's policies and practices in nearly every area of our operations," he said. "Going through such a rigorous process strengthened SRT in a number of ways, and being accredited inspires us to continue improving our work in the future."

Livingston added that SRT's accreditation tells landowners, policymakers and the public that the organization meets a nationwide standard of excellence -- the LTA Standards and Practices -- in areas ranging from governance and recordkeeping to land protection and stewardship.

"SRT's conservation work requires expertise in everything from real estate law to restoration ecology; from grant management to measures of livestock forage utilization," said Hilary Dustin, SRT conservation director.

SRT is now authorized to display the LTA accreditation seal, indicating to the public that it meets the highest national standards for excellence, upholds the public trust, and ensures that its conservation efforts are permanent.

"The seal is a high mark of distinction in the land conservation field," said Aaron Collins, SRT director of communications and community relations. "Earning this accreditation reflects SRT's ongoing dedication to the very best conservation practices and organizational effectiveness."

He added that conserving land helps maintain clean air and drinking water, improves food security, preserves scenic landscapes and views, offers recreational places and enhances habitat for the diversity of life on earth.

"Across the country, communities have joined in forming land trusts to save the places they love. Land trusts have worked with willing landowners to save over 47 million acres of farms, forests, and other natural places people care about. Strong, well-managed land trusts unite effective champions and local caretakers of critical land resources, and safeguard these resources for future generations," Collins said.

Sequoia Riverlands Trust is a regional, nonprofit land trust dedicated to conserving California's heartland and the natural and agricultural legacy of the southern Sierra Nevada and San Joaquin Valley. SRT's mission is to protect working landscapes, wildlife habitat and scenic open spaces, while ensuring that economic growth in local communities remains vibrant and sustainable.

To date, SRT has protected more than 13,000 acres. The trust owns and manages six nature preserves that protect 4,000 acres of remnant landscapes, woodland communities and wildlife habitat. SRT has also collaborated with agencies, other non-profit conservation organizations and landowners to protect 3,811 additional acres.

For more information, visit www.sequoiariverlands.org.

Central Valley Enrollment Figures Released By Covered California

STAFF REPORTS

Covered California and the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) announced that from October 1 to November 30, as a benefit of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, an estimated 30,161 individuals in the Central Valley started applications for Covered California health insurance plans.

Cumulatively, 7,660 individuals in the counties of San Joaquin, Kern, Stanislaus, Merced, Mariposa, Tulare, Fresno, Kings and Madera have enrolled in subsidized or non-subsidized Covered California health insurance plans, which reflects about 7 percent of the statewide enrollment (these counties make up 10 percent of those eligible for subsidies statewide).

Covered California and DHCS released statewide figures showing that applications were started for an estimated 777,000 individuals in October and November. For the two-month period statewide, 109,296 individuals enrolled in Covered California health insurance plans. For the same period, 179,000 were determined to be likely eligible for Medi-Cal.

Other facts about Central Valley enrollment figures:

- All consumers chose one of the four health insurance carriers that have traditionally been the largest in the individual market: Blue Shield of California, Anthem Blue Cross of California, Kaiser Permanente and Health Net.
- For the individuals in the Central Valley who were eligible for subsidies, the great majority (72 percent) selected the "Silver" level of benefits, which is the level at which the federal premium assistance is targeted. Those who are not eligible for subsidies were more likely to buy across the spectrum of levels of coverage.

December 23 was the deadline for consumers to enroll for health insurance coverage taking effect January 1, but consumers can continue enrolling in Covered California plans through March 31. Medi-Cal enrollment is continuous throughout the year.

Consumers have many ways to enroll in Covered California health insurance plans and in Medi-Cal, including meeting in person with thousands of trained Certified Insurance Agents, Certified Enrollment Counselors and county eligibility workers, who can provide assistance with completing applications. Consumers can find the nearest in-person help on CoveredCA.com. Additionally, self-enrollment is available online, and enrollment can be completed over the phone by calling Covered California's Service Center at (800) 300-1506.

Covered California, in partnership with the California Department of Health Care Services, was charged with creating a new health insurance marketplace in which individuals and small businesses can get access to affordable health insurance plans.

For more information, visit www.CoveredCA.com.

Holiday Treats Can Lead to Tooth Pain

DR. KREIGH SEDILLO

The abundance of hot drinks, cold drinks, sweet treats, hard candies and other indulgences over the holidays sometimes leave us with more than just sugar-induced regrets; sometimes they reveal tooth pain and sensitivity.

Tooth sensitivity and tooth pain are common complaints. One or both can be an indication of dental problems that need attention.

Possible causes include:

- Tooth decay (cavities)
- Teeth fractures
- Worn-out fillings
- Gum disease
- Worn tooth enamel
- Exposed tooth root

In Medieval Germany, the prescriptive cure for a toothache was to kiss a donkey. Fortunately, we have better ways of addressing the problem today.

Healthy teeth are covered in a layer of enamel – the hardest substance in the human body. Nevertheless, as the enamel wears down or is somehow fractured, the sensitive dentin underneath is exposed to heat, cold and other irritants that cause pain.

Sensitivity can be treated, depending on the cause of the problem. Some of the treatments, according to the American Dental Association, include:

- Desensitizing toothpaste. This contains compounds that help block transmission of sensation from the tooth surface to the nerve, and usually requires several applications before the sensitivity is reduced.
- Fluoride gel. An in-office technique that strengthens tooth enamel and reduces the transmission of sensations.
- A crown, inlay or bonding. These may be used to correct a flaw or decay that results in sensitivity.
- Surgical gum graft. If gum tissue has been lost from the root, this will protect the root and reduce sensitivity.
- Root canal. If sensitivity is severe and persistent and cannot be treated by other means, your dentist may recommend this treatment to eliminate the problem.

Good, daily oral hygiene will help avoid many of the situations that give rise to tooth sensitivity and other problems. But if you have frequent sensitivity or ongoing tooth pain, schedule an appointment with your dentist right away.

Dr. Kreigh Sedillo, who graduated from UCLA School of Dentistry, has been practicing in Visalia for the past 10 years. His practice, Smile Visalia, is located on Caldwell east of Court.

Resolutions

Continued from p. 1

Visalia Vice Mayor Warren Gubler shared his two resolutions: "1) No new taxes in 2014; and 2) Try to not follow the example of Stockton, Bell, Detroit or Rob Ford of Toronto!" "As far as New Year's resolutions, I have never been big on them but have always been a supporter of people setting goals and working on them all the time," said Tulare County Supervisor Phil Cox. "It seems that people who set New Year's resolutions set goals once per year and seldom follow through. How many times have people said they want to loose 20 pounds this year just to make it 30 pounds the next year? Personally I set daily, weekly, monthly, annual and lifetime goals. One of my monthly goals at the end of this year was to read at least two books per month. So far in the last three months, I have been able to read 12 books. So instead of setting resolutions for the year on January 1st, I would encourage people young and old to get in the habit of regularly setting goals on a daily, weekly and other longer terms. By looking at where we are on a daily basis, whether it be on a personal level, spiritually, academic or in our work, we can all have daily success stories to tell."

Although Tulare County Supervisor Steven Worthley also admitted he was "not much of a new year's resolution person," he said, "My 2014 resolution is to lose 15 pounds and be re-elected to the Tulare County Board of Supervisors by the good citizens of District 4."

"Looking ahead for 2014, I have a few personal wishes in addition to work," said Tulare County District Attorney Timothy Ward. "In 2014, I would like to spend a little more time with my father who isn't getting any younger, and by the end of summer help teach my daughter to swim. Professionally, I will continue to lead the best district attorney's office in the Valley, and continue serving our communities and victims of crime."

Porterville Council Member Pete V. McCracken resolved "to continue to represent all of the residents of the City of Porterville to the best of my abilities with priority on: 1) public safety; 2) water, sewer and trash disposal; 3) streets and roads; 4) parks, recreation, leisure activities and library; and 5) other issues under the responsibility of the City of Porterville that affect our residents."

"As an elected official, the New Year brings the opportunity for a fresh start," said Porterville Council Member Virginia Gurrola. "Communication and engagement are key elements in this New Year's resolution. It is my desire in 2014 to continue to problem-solve through respect, encouragement of all voices, and commitment to human rights. I know that our greatest assets are the members of our community, and I will continue to seek opportunities that bring new jobs to Porterville while improving the quality of life that all our citizens should enjoy."

"I don't have much in New Year's resolutions," admitted Porterville Council Member Greg Shelton, "but here's something for you to print: Besides my perennial promise to eat less, and exercise more – LOL! – this year, I have resolved to spend more time with the people in my life who have made me what I am. I remember on Thanksgiving about five years back, I was complaining to an older friend about how my visiting mother – whom I love dearly – was DRIVING ME CRAZY! Well my friend told me that her mother did the same thing to her, but that she had just passed away the year before, and that she would now give ANYTHING to have her mother around to 'drive her crazy' for just one more year. At that point, I realized that both friends and family are a transitory gift...and should be appreciated as such! I'm reminded of a quote by Yeats, 'Think where man's glory most begins and ends, and say my glory was I had such friends.' God bless, and Happy Holidays to all...and love ya, Mom!!!"

Jennifer Nicholson, executive director of Riata Ranch International, did some soul searching and decided that she needed to reorganize her priorities. "It's amazing to see the positive results once I put the truly important parts of my life first," she said. "Things are falling into place. So, my 2014 resolution is to continue to put my faith first, then family, then the pressing issues of the day. Although my New Year's resolution is quite simple and not unique, I find that starting with oneself on the inside makes everything else better. I look forward to a purposeful and prosperous 2014."

"I love the idea of introspection and desiring to better ourselves in the year ahead," said Jessica Cavale, director of development for the Visalia Rescue Mission, "although this does not necessarily mean I keep all those resolutions each year. A few of mine are as follows: become a better cook and do meal planning each week for at least three to four of the nights (my husband is a great cook. I just need to learn a thing or two); get up early and workout three days a week; do devotions/journal/read the Bible at the beginning of each day;

send/give cards and gifts on time (not just within the month) for birthdays and other celebrations; read one book per month (minimum); more listening and encouraging; travel somewhere I've never been; and plant garden boxes (well, learn to garden in general)."

"Visalia Farmers Market Association is looking forward to creating community partnerships and finding local sponsors to enhance programs offered at our markets such as: Market Match fruit and vegetable incentives, cooking demonstrations, nutrition education and farmer-led interactive workshops," said Market Manager Naomi Alberstein. "In 2014, these programs will help to provide access to fresh healthy food for more families, support our local small farmers and create an even more fantastic experience at Visalia Farmers Markets, where community happens!"

"This year, I'm going to eat healthier and carve out more beach-time surfing – helping me be more mentally and spiritually productive and prosperous at work and at home," said Aaron Gomes, Sound N Vision Foundation founder and executive director.

"Having just turned 79, my New Year's resolution for the coming year – is to get to 2015," said Allan Fisher of the Mission Care Group.

"My New Year's resolution is to get the word out about Jesus Christ in whatever manner or means possible and to connect with those resolved to do the same, so more will know Him," said Nick Anthony, outreach pastor at Crossroads Community Church.

"My New Year's resolution will be to be excited and thrilled about climbing the mountain ahead as I take one step at a time, one challenge at a time, to fully enjoy the journey to the summit!" offered Cheryl Christman, board president of ImagineU Interactive Children's Museum. "Oh yeah, and don't sweat the small stuff!"

"My New Year's resolution is to incorporate routine exercise toward a healthier lifestyle along with completing my educational goal of graduating from Fresno State's MBA program with distinction in 2014," said Raymond C. Macareno, publisher of Nuestro Tiempo Magazine.

"I hereby resolve to display more 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control' in the coming year," said Sandy Hagar of Quail Park Retirement Village.

"My New Year's resolution is to shop with reusable bags," said Caroline Koontz,

executive director of the Arts Consortium. "I had the same resolution last year and I did a fairly good job at remembering to take them into the grocery store and to the Farmers Market, but I think I can do better in 2014. I know this might seem like an underwhelming goal, but it is a little something I can do that positively impacts our environment and saves resources."

"I resolve to be debt free before the end of 2014," said Chris Brewer, Bear State Books publisher and Valley historian.

Visalia Rawhide General Manager Jennifer Pendergraft has a unique resolution. "My New Year's resolution will be to take up cross-bow shooting," she said. "Something random and fun – good stress release and keeps my upper body in shape."

"The 2013 Rawhide had a nice playoff run, new attendance records, and witnessed great Major League accomplishments by Visalia Rawhide alumni Paul Goldschmidt (MVP runner-up) and Max Scherzer (Cy Young Award winner)," noted Tom Seidler, Visalia Rawhide team owner. "It's time in 2014 to bring a California League Championship to Visalia!"

You and Your Personal Super Computer

KAY PACKARD

The Head Line in your hands illustrates the unique operations of your mental system. Just as your computer has a CPU (central processing unit), you do, too. You employ your mental system when you plan dinner, a vacation and your New Year resolutions. In hand analysis, the length, shape and quality of this line are associated with how you comprehend information and make decisions. The Head Line is associated with the element of air. Consider what happens in the air around you; information flows. This line is one of the three major lines in the palm. The other two major lines are the Life (see Nov. 21 issue) and Heart Lines.

The Head Line starts on the inside of the palm, above the inset of the thumb, and extends across the middle of the hand (see figure 1). Head Lines are different on every hand. They range in length from short to very long. The shapes are straight and flat, rounded downward, and deeply curving toward the wrist (see figure 2).

As invisible radio signals travel through the airwaves, so too do your ideas, thoughts, concepts, theories and perceptions surge though your internal airways. These channels represent your mental wiring system. Nature has created an etching in your hand to depict how your unique computer system is programmed. How you plan, reason, analyze and integrate ideas can be read from your Head Lines. The Head Line on your left hand shows how you think at home and the Head Line on your right hand shows how you reason at work, in the outer world.

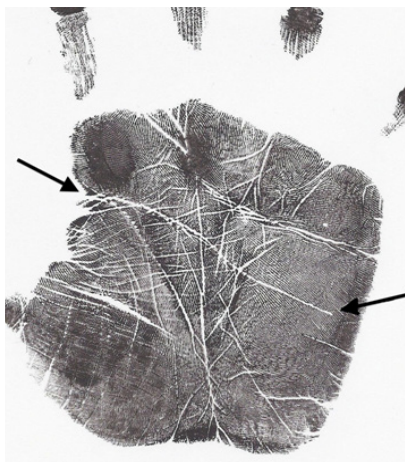

Fig. 1 Long, straight and flat Head Line: Synthesizer

Owners of short Head Lines tend to make decisions quickly. When I asked a hand analysis student with a short Head Line how she decided to buy her very lucrative stocks, she replied, "I did a quick analysis and bought!" She got a tip from a friend and simply liked the products she was investing in. People with short Head Lines draw conclusions more quickly than people with longer Head Lines and if the line is also clear, they're not likely to change their mind.

The longer the line, the more time is spent 'on-line' considering and compartmentalizing information. When one of my students with a long, straight Head Line started a business he created a lengthy business plan, with extensive cost analysis, and purchased a high tech email system with elaborate features for maintaining contacts and selling products. He expressed many ideas to get his business off the ground and to expand. He's also writing a book and leading workshops.

When the Head Line is long, clear of obstruction, extends straight across the hand and terminates about ½ inch before the edge of the palm (fig. 1) you'll find the octopus brain. This person won't feel fulfilled unless he or she has an avenue to use his or her multifaceted brain. All legs of the octopus must be in synthesis mode for the owner to feel a deep sense of satisfaction.

Children with long Head Lines need enough intellectual challenge to keep them busy with school and home projects otherwise they may very well create problems with siblings, friends or school mates.

One 8-year-old in my Project Snowflake showed me his hands with a broken Head Line. For a fraction of an inch the line was broken but soon resumed and continued toward the edge of the hand. His sister told me that he would stop talking midstream of telling a story. I asked her not to complete his sentences for him, knowing that he'd get back 'online' and complete his thought. He's now 11-years-old and his Head Line is reattached.

Adults with this very long headline are capable of multi-tasking and require colossal complexity through projects at work and home. If you have this Head Line, a sure sign to know you're not fully using your potential is relationship problems. If you initiate a problem in a relationship with your spouse or sister, then you have a juicy problem to wrestle with.

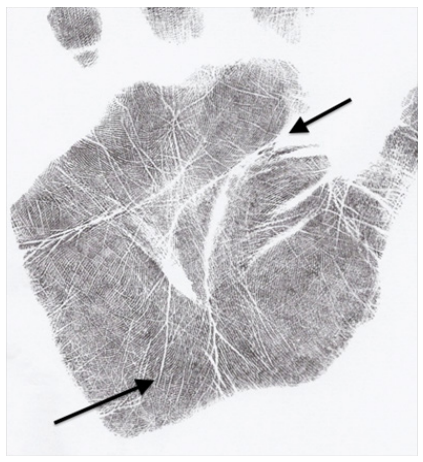

Fig. 2 Long, curving Head Line down toward the wrist: Sensitive

Check the quality of the line. Is your Head Line etched smoothly without obstruction? If yes, the more clear your thinking. Does it break then restart at a new point? If there is a break or interruption in the line, then you will most likely experience your mental computer flipping off-line and rebooting every now and then.

The deep, curving Head Line (fig. 2) signifies a person who is deeply reflective, creative and perceptive in their thinking. Deep meaning in life influences their ideas and considerations. They are sensitive and responsive to their environment including people's feelings. The deeply curving Head Line implies a gift of hidden and consuming emotion, where there is no reason, and the genius to understand others who enter into their world of deep waters. If they aren't already, I suggest to my clients with long, curving Head Lines to involve themselves in hospice or other deeply caring healthcare.

Kay Packard

Keep in mind -- no Head Line is better than another. The way a person processes information is simply the way a person processes information. Consider that everyone comprehends information differently, and people make decisions in different ways. A mentor once said, "Seek to understand, then to be understood." Taking time to better understand your own methods for decision-making and considering another's different way of decision-making can generate patience and compassion when relating to others.

Kay Packard is a Master Hand Analyst who lives in Three Rivers. For more information, visit www.KayPackard.com.

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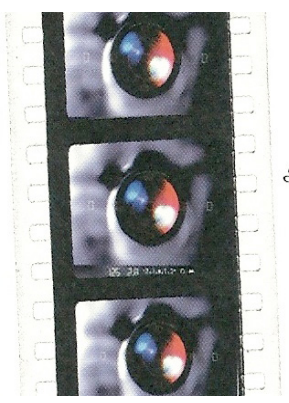
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO: editor@ourvalleyvoice.com

Response to Tulare County

In response to the *Valley Voice*'s article on the "County Responds to Mooney Grove Cat Controversy," Dr. Weber, a TNR volunteer, had these comments: Supervisor Cox was offended that the county was portrayed as all we want to do is kill cats, which is far from the truth. **What is the truth?** As has been stated by county officials capturing stray cats and taking them to animal shelters has been standard practice at Mooney Grove for more than twenty years. This practice of trapping and killing is costly and inhumane. Out of more than 9013 cats found or turned over to animal shelters in Tulare County in 2011, 7,613 (or 84.4%) were euthanized, the latest figures compiled by the California Department of Public Health. Tulare County's kill rates are the highest in California and are an unnecessary expense to Tulare County taxpayers. **The TNR (Trap-Neutering-Releasing) program is humane and costs the Tulare County taxpayers nothing.**

Concerning the TNR theory that an established colony keeps out new cats, Mr. Cox said, "I don't think that is true" and he feels that the TNR Program could actually increase the number of cats. **What is the truth?** The Humane Society of the United States supports TNR. In September, 2013, that agency and other animal rights groups distributed a report on animal care and welfare making 23 recommendations to California animal control agencies, including the adoption of TNR Programs. "Where municipalities have shifted from euthanasia to TNR, they have not seen increases in problems associated with stray and feral cats. On the contrary, TNR practices can stabilize or decrease the size of the community of cat colonies," according to the report, which also states that cats are more likely to be euthanized in animal shelters than dogs. **According to a recent study it costs the county to trap, transport, euthanize and dispose of one cat approximately $185. The TNR program costs the Tulare County taxpayer nothing. The cost savings could be used to reduce the fees at our low-cost spay and neuter clinics.**

Supervisor Cox believes that the cats have become a public safety issue for the people that use the park, particularly the threat of spreading disease. Mary Lindsay, assistant county administrative officer, said that another public safety is the fleas. **What is the truth?** All cats that have been through the TNR program have been tested for communicable diseases, have been spayed or neutered, are **vaccinated for rabies** and other communicable disease, and they are **treated for fleas**, mites, and dewormed. The cats then have their ear clipped for easy recognition. They are monitored and fed daily. **All at no cost to the county.** Approximately 80% of the cats in Mooney Grove Park have gone through the TNR program. These cats pose no more of a health or safety risk than the cats we have at home. And, if the county has a flea problem in Mooney Grove Park it is not because of the cats.

Mr. Cox admitted, "We could do a better job of getting the cats adopted out," and then he suggested an "Adopt a Mooney Grove Cat Day." We, the TNR volunteers, have an "Adopt a Mooney Grove Cat Day," every day of the year. Since we started the TNR program we have found homes for at least 24 kittens and approximately a dozen adult cats. Finding good homes for the Mooney Grove kittens and cats has always been a key component of the TNR program. Unfortunately, not all cats are adoptable. We believe those cats have the **right to life not death.**

Finally, let me address the most egregious part of this article. It is the email concerning Neil Pilegard's use of a bow and arrow to hunt the fowl in Mooney Grove Park. I find this behavior appalling. How can Mr. Pilegard, Tulare County Director of Parks, have such a complete and total disregard for public safety? Any weapon or device that would injure, maim, or kill an animal can just as easily injure, maim, or kill an adult or child! This conduct warrants further investigation. Mr. Pilegard's actions should have consequences! Supervisor Cox and the county state, "There are legal consequences of perpetuating cruelty against any animal." **WORDS ARE CHEAP!**

Dr. Larry Weber

YOUR RESPONSES ONLINE

"I think it is a non point that ducks/geese have not been bow and arrowed since December of 2012 but stopping that practice was a good thing.

In all the time the cats have been in the park has there been one child scratched by one of them and a resulting illness reported?

The litter sounds like a human shortcoming as does dumping any animal. I agree there should be ample signs stating stiff fines will be exacted should anyone be caught doing either. If we are fined for throwing trash on our highways why is it not so for our public parks.

I'd like to hear more about a solid plan to place the cats in homes or no-kill shelters but that sounds like an effort in frustration considering the number of cats involved. Once these cats are removed it is a fact that more cats will come and form a new colony, and they are not ALL dumped.

Volunteers should be careful to avoid confrontation for all the obvious reasons."

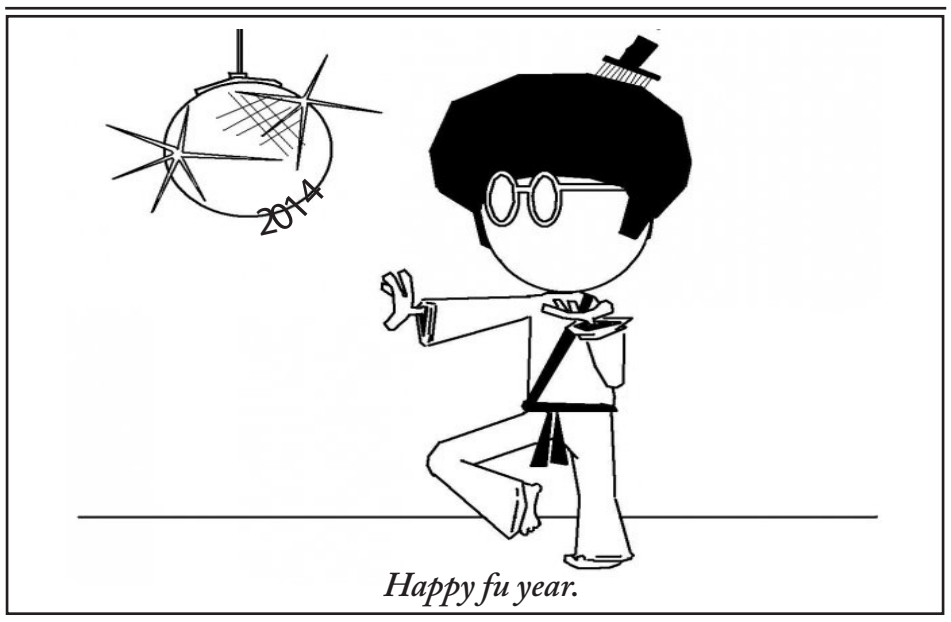
— *Donna Johnston*

CORRECTION

We have been informed by Paul M. Saldana, president and CEO of the EDC that was the main subject of a front page article in our December 19th issue, that, "the EDC's name is 'Economic Development Corporation serving Tulare County' (officially incorporated as the Tulare County Economic Development Corporation). We are not nor have we ever been or called the Sequoia Valley EDC."

For more information about the EDC, please visit www.sequoiavalley.com.

Black Tie



Happy fu year.

Rethinking Medical Marijuana

Recently, medical marijuana has been repeatedly attacked in both local media in Tulare, and even statewide. We often will read in the paper, or watch mindlessly on our TV screens, disinformation that teaches us of apparent "inherent violence" in the medical marijuana community. What a lot of these stories being run are not telling you is that these are not your normal patients, and in many cases not legal patients at all. Often time, people wielding firearms and conducting violent acts are not growing within the current legal code of conduct anyway.

Another problem us cardholders face is that we are usually ultimately associated or connected with these types of cartel organizations. And when we do abide by the law for our medical needs legitimately, the law is often very vague and almost seems written to include fines or even incarceration for what are real and serious health issues and needs of the citizens.

Prop 215, the Compassionate Use Act, cannot be forgotten and the real and almost miracle-like medicinal qualities of marijuana cannot be forgotten. I myself was paralyzed from the waist down and was mentally and emotionally shackled by harmful narcotic pharmaceutical drugs until I started using medical marijuana. Upon such a serious threat to our real and extremely important medical community, what we need most is a voice, a voice for the people.

What I am proposing as a simple citizen of Tulare, and a cardholder, is a group, collaboration or coalition of legitimate citizens and cardholders to help direct our own future, with our absolute number one priority being public and community safety, especially and always for the children. I think that if true and legal cardholders were to meet regularly, we could easily ratify ideas that could not only improve the safety of our communities by stopping crime by reducing prices, but also introduce new ideas working with the state to monitor and perhaps even tax medical marijuana in the future.

Either way, our industry needs legitimate direction and organization, and as a citizen and cardholder, I, Roger Southfield, am prepared to guide our community in any positive way possible.

Roger Southfield, Director
"Common Sense & Change"

RE Report: Winter Housing Market

WILLIAM MENKE

As we enter 2014, there is renewed optimism in the real estate market. Varying expert sales forecasts have somewhat tempered expectations, but new residential construction activity and solid existing home sales hint at continued market strength. While the number of sold houses over this summer and holiday season has not increased in comparison to the last few years, the median and average sales prices have. This year's winter lull is looking rather typical.

The middle of November to the middle of January is roughly considered the holiday slowdown in real estate. A lot of buyers like to avoid holiday distractions. Preparation for Thanksgiving Day and cleanup following New Year's festivities seem to take precedence over house hunting. The drop in homes sold from the height of summer to the holiday months is usually about 10-15%. The slowdown can be as much attributed to the distracted agent as the preoccupied consumer.

Over the last four years, there hasn't been a huge difference in home prices from the summer to winter months. The active 2013 summer market saw more buyers than sellers—driving prices higher. November and December have experienced a slight increase in inventory, but prices are still trending upward. The holiday slowdown refers mostly to a decrease in closed sales and new listings. Even the housing bubble years of 2005-2006 followed these trends. Across the Valley, the holiday season of 2005 actually saw residential sales drop by closer to 25%—a dramatically higher percentage than seen in recent years.

That is not to say that real estate transactions are nonexistent during the holidays. A home purchase is a significant event. Buying a house as a Christmas gift is a rarity, but it does happen. I have personal knowledge of a group of family members buying a house for their mother as a present. I also know of several agents who have been involved in deals where escrow was purposely scheduled to close just before the New Year. There is no best time to buy a home, so purchase on your own schedule.

ImagineU Breaks Ground for New Children's Museum

STEVE PASTIS

The new ImagineU Museum is expected to open in spring 2015.

ImagineU Interactive Children's Museum held the groundbreaking for its eagerly anticipated new facility on December 18. About 100 community leaders and other museum supporters were present to help launch the construction phase of the new museum, which is expected to open in spring 2015.

The new ImagineU, which will be located at 603 E. Oak Ave. in Visalia, will feature 15,000 square feet of new hands-on indoor exhibits, as well as outdoor exhibits, that inspire children to learn. The community will benefit from the Amphimeadow (the planned outdoor amphitheater), an education/community room with kitchen, and a Focus Group Facility.

The building was designed by The Taylor Group, and award-winning exhibit designer Haizlip Studios from the East Coast designed the exhibits.

"It's not just a local children's museum," said Cheryl Christman, ImagineU board president. "It's going to be a regional children's museum. There's no other children's museum of this caliber three hours in any direction. We think that people will make this a travel destination.

ImagineU's board of directors breaks ground on the new museum.

"It's an opportunity for children to experience the things they haven't had a chance to experience before," she added. "It opens up a whole new world for them."

Exhibits will include the Majestic Oak Tree Climber, the U Fix it Garage, Angela's Castle Theatre, the Grove Pick and Pack, Ready Set Grow and Wonderful Water.

"I get excited about all of them," said Christman. "The Majestic Oak Tree Climber is going to be a fabulous exhibit. The Grove Pick and Pack shows children what the Valley is all about. The Wonderful Water exhibit outside teaches children about water conservation. At Imagination Station, children can express themselves creatively."

The majority of the funding, $5.4 million, is the result of a grant through the State of California Parks and Recreation Proposition 84 Nature's Facility Grant. An additional $500,000 has come from donations from local business and individuals.

When the Valley Voice reported on ImagineU's plans in May 2009, the museum's goal was to raise $3.6 million.

"That was the original cost of just the original building, not the entire project," explained Christman. "The project is about $6.5 to $7 million. We've added a banquet facility to the project, so that has added some additional cost, and construction costs have gone up since then. We also changed our original location."

The banquet facility will be a community gathering place that can be rented out for workshops and other events. "It will also enable us to have our own fundraising events right there," said Christman.

ImagineU Museum is currently conducting a capital campaign with the goal of raising an additional $2 million for the museum.

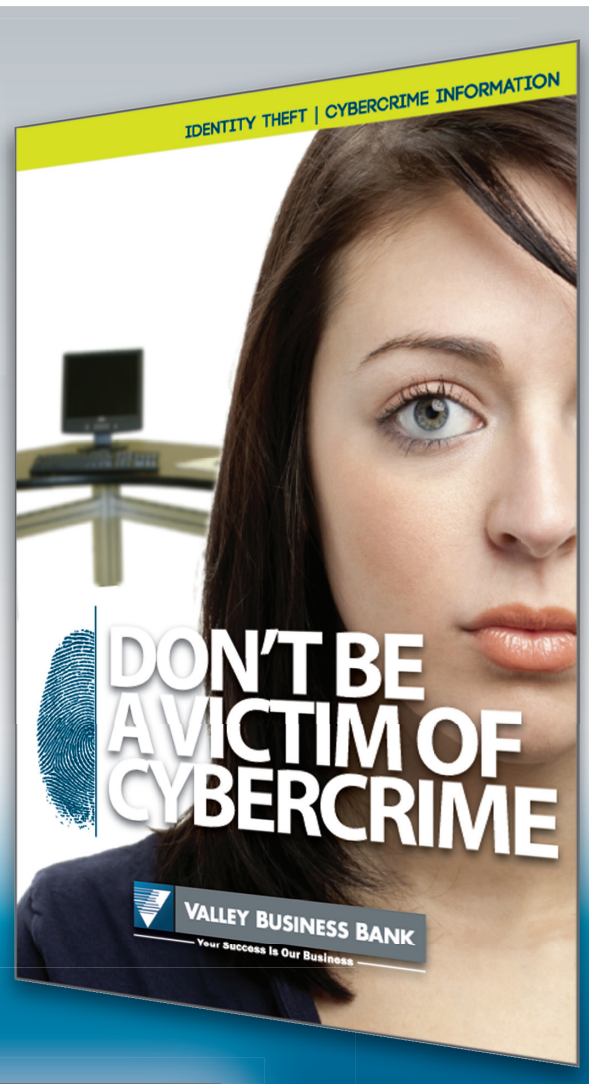
"This includes opportunities for individuals, businesses and corporations for sponsoring naming rights to exhibits and rooms, perhaps in memory of a loved one," said Christman, who added that negotiations are currently underway for some naming rights.

To take a virtual tour of the new ImagineU Museum or for information about the museum, including sponsorship opportunities, visit www.imagineu-museum.org and click on "New ImagineU." The museum, which is currently operating at 700 E. Main St. in Visalia, can also be reached at 733-5975.

YOU WORK HARD FOR YOUR MONEY

Breaches of sensitive information are a constant threat and can occur at any time, whether you are shopping at your favorite department store or making a purchase for your business online. Know what to do in case a breach happens to you!

Valley Business Bank has produced a booklet on cybercrime containing real life examples, essential preventative measures, and what to do if you are victimized. Please feel free to stop at any one of our conveniently located offices in Visalia, Fresno, Woodlake, Tulare, or Tipton for your free copy.



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‘Forever Tango’ to Bring Passion and Excitement to Visalia Fox

Luis Bravo’s “Forever Tango” is coming to the Visalia Fox Theatre for an 8pm performance on Thursday, January 9. The show features a world-renowned, all Argentine cast, bringing a unique excitement and passion to the stage.

‘The tango is a feeling that you dance – a story you tell in three minutes.’

“Forever Tango” traces, through music, dance and dramatic vignettes, the tango’s colorful, often checkered history, from its beginnings in the turn-of-the-century Buenos Aires bordellos to its acceptance into high society. Sensuous and sophisticated, the tango inhabits a world where everything can be said with the flick of a leg, the tug of a hand, the tap of a foot, and the arch of an eyebrow.

After breaking San Francisco box office records for a touring musical with 92 weeks at Theatre on the Square, the production went on the road. Wild and frenzied ovations greeted performances at the Spoleto Arts Festival in Italy, and in London, Chicago, San Diego, Los Angeles, Toronto, Montreal, Boston and Philadelphia.

This internationally acclaimed dance spectacle arrived at Broadway’s Walter Kerr Theatre on June 16, 1997 with a June 19 opening night. Due to its box-office success, the Broadway run was extended and moved to the Marquis Theatre. The production closed August 1, 1998 after over a year on Broadway – the longest-running tango show in Broadway history.

Created and directed by Bravo, “Forever Tango” features a cast of 26 performers including 14 brilliant, exceptionally adept dancers who tango in their own unique styles, offering variety and dramatic insights to the dance. Led by musical director/arranger Lisandro Adrover, the on-stage 11-piece orchestra is anchored by the bandoneón, an accordion-like instrument imported to Argentina from Germany in 1886 to become a mainstay of tango music with a melancholy, longing sound unique to the tango. With only 200 bandoneón players in the world, this production is fortunate to have four bandoneón players on stage. They are joined by the acclaimed Argentinean singer, Carlos Morel.

“The tango is a feeling that you dance – a story you tell in three minutes,” says Bravo. “It’s passionate, it’s melancholic. It’s tender, it’s violent. You dance it with somebody - but it is so internal, you dance it by yourself.” He added, “the tango represents more than just a dance – it is also a music, a culture, a way of life.”

Reserved seats are $39 to $100, and are available online at Ticketfly.com, at the TicketFly Call Center (1-877-435-9849), at the Visalia Fox box office or by phone at 625-1369.

3 Doors Down

3 Doors Down to Headline Visalia Rescue Mission Fundraiser

Rock quintet 3 Doors Down, which rose to international fame with its first single, “Kryptonite,” will take the stage at the Visalia Fox Theatre on January 15th for “3 Doors Down Acoustic - Songs from the Basement.” This isn’t just your average concert – it’s a benefit for the Visalia Rescue Mission to raise money for its new undertaking: a partnership with the City of Visalia in an effort to revitalize Oval Park.

“This isn’t just about a park; it’s about partnering with this community and restoring a neighborhood,” explained newly hired VRM employee Ryan Stillwater. “We believe large-scale events are the means to get the ball rolling.

“As a benefit event, businesses and individuals alike have an amazing opportunity to enjoy a great concert and support the Visalia Rescue Mission and our revitalization effort at Oval Park,” said Stillwater, who opted to host this January concert at the Fox Theatre

Continued on p. 24 »

College of the Sequoias’ Theatre Department will present two performances of its adaptation of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.”

Two Performances to Raise Money for COS’ Inclusion in Theater Festival

College of the Sequoias’ Theatre Department will present two performances of its adaptation of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” to raise money for the production’s inclusion in the prestigious Kennedy Center’s American College Theater Festival.

The COS Fall 2013 production of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” has been selected by the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival for presentation at the 43rd annual festival next month in Los Angeles. It is one of eight productions chosen from among 60 nominated shows presented by colleges and universities throughout the southwestern United States during the past year.

The COS production of the Shakespeare classic is an original adaptation by Professor Chris Mangels.

“Moving an entire production to a new location will be incredibly difficult,” said Mangels, who is also the production’s director. “But students, faculty and staff are absolutely up to the challenge.”

“A Midsummer Night’s Dream” will be performed at 7:30pm at the COS Theater on January 30 and 31. The performances will raise money for the transportation of the set, costumes and students to Southern California for the festival. The performances will also give the cast and crew the opportunity to revisit the production and address the technical challenges of rebuilding the set in 12 hours.

General admission tickets are $20; $10 for students with valid student ID. The January 31 performance will include limited $100 per person VIP passes, which include pre-show VIP room with hors d’oeuvres, wine and entertainment, VIP seating for the production, VIP room with desserts and drinks during intermission.

The COS Foundation also seeks sponsors to help cover the cost of taking the production to Los Angeles. Any person or business interested in helping should call the COS Foundation at 730-3861.

Concert to Feature Clay Jenkinson as Roosevelt, Music by Chris Brubeck

DONNA OROZCO

Many Tulare County Symphony-goers are fans of Clay Jenkinson, who has portrayed Thomas Jefferson and Teddy Roosevelt here numerous times. They also loved it when Chris Brubeck brought his piece “Ansel Adams America” and played trombone with the symphony last January.

Clay Jenkinson as Teddy Roosevelt

So it’s a sure bet that they will enjoy “Roosevelt in Cowboy Land” – written by Brubeck and narrated by Jenkinson – when the symphony performs it Saturday, January 18 at 7:30pm at the Visalia Fox Theatre.

Brubeck, son of the famed Dave Brubeck, is an accomplished musician and composer. He wrote “Ansel Adams America” with his father. When the piece is performed, 100 of Adams’ photographs are projected above the orchestra. He will be here for the performance and is coming to rehearsals to give some suggestions and feedback.

“Since it’s a newish piece, it’s a chance for him to get to hear a performance of the work again,” said music director Bruce Kiesling. “Not only that, but he has said how much he enjoyed his time here the last time, and he’s looking forward to hearing and working with the orchestra again.”

In an email interview, Chris Brubeck talked about writing “Cowboy Land.”

Continued on p. 24 »

Virtuoso Violinist Returns to Visalia

BILL HAXTON

Danielle Belen, one of North America's most charismatic violinists, returns to our area for a single performance on Sunday, January 5, at 3pm. Belen has soloed with major orchestras across the continent and has an uncanny knack for bringing audiences to their feet. Her lyrical, expressive tone is almost like language, intimate yet powerful. She plays her 300-year-old violin with warmth and energy.

Belen will perform one moving virtuoso piece after another, including the "Sonata for Violin in A Major" by César Franck, two movements of Prokofiev's "Sonata Number 1," Saint Saëns' charming "Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso," and Maurice Ravel's wild and humorous "Tzigane."

Danielle Belen

Her program opens with the immortal "Franck Sonata," a story of falling in love, with all of the hope and uncertainty, all of the joy and doubt that we've all experienced at one time or another.

The first movement, "Allegretto ben Moderato," opens with a tentative theme on piano, followed by a wistful, pensive melody from violin. Both violin and piano then introduce an intense theme of profound, unrequited longing, which will reappear in later movements.

The second movement, "Allegro," launches immediately into a turbulent theme, like a wild river that gains force as it tumbles downhill. The middle section erupts in a burst of energy – bewildered, striving, occasionally disconsolate, then builds to an increasingly tumultuous close.

The "Recitativo: Fantasia" third movement is almost otherworldly, ethereally dreamlike, but once again projects that longing theme that organically links it to the two preceding movements. The gorgeous melody is arresting, beautifully lyrical, though sad.

The fourth movement, Allegretto poco mosso, erupts with euphoria. It bursts with hope and love and giddy optimism, completely dispelling the doubts and pangs of the first three movements.

Although Ravel's high spirited Tzigane is only ten minutes, it makes demands on a violinist that only a few are able meet. The difficulties are compound – complex fingering, dauntingly precise bowing, unusual rhythms, wild double stopping intersected with lightning fast pizzicatto, not to mention the need for the phrasing to make musical sense.

There's a story in this music, too. The violin opens solo, heralding the coming of something ominous, dark and brooding. In the melody you can hear an echo of distant Gypsies in the deep woods of Romania. Then, suddenly, a bird's cheerful singing brightens the mood but for just a moment. Darkness returns, sharp-edged, until the piano enters and you soon find yourself on the edge of firelight in a Gypsy camp just as some old man starts clowning for slapstick laughs. Now the revels begin, dancing, whirling, not entirely sober. Ravel has fun here. There's a fully inebriated section about as comical as anything in music. It spins and whirls out of control, taunting the reserved among us, before finally collapsing in a well-earned exhausted heap.

As a result of a sponsorship from Bank of the Sierra, children, students and an adult accompanying them are admitted free. Otherwise, tickets are $12 and available online at www.musicatthemain.org, or at the door.

James Garner as Johnny Cash

James Garner to Perform Johnny Cash Tribute at the Visalia Fox

STEVE PASTIS

James Garner will perform his tribute to Johnny Cash at the Visalia Fox Theatre on Saturday, January 11. Those at the 8pm concert will hear such Cash classics as "Folsom Prison Blues," "I Walk the Line" and "Ring of Fire," along with other hits from a career that spanned six decades.

Between songs, Garner will share stories about Cash and his band, The Tennessee Three, and the popular and influential music they created – music that influenced Garner as a sixth grader in 1991.

"I grew up in Hanford and Johnny Cash was coming to play at the Hanford Fox," Garner recalled. "I didn't know who Johnny Cash was."

After seeing Cash perform, however, Garner bought "Johnny Cash's Greatest Hits," at Sam Goody Music on Mooney Boulevard in Visalia. "I started listening to it and just fell in love with it," he said.

Since then, Garner has become an expert on Cash's life.

"I like telling stories about Johnny Cash as much as I like singing the songs," he said. "He cut a broad swath across popular culture, and when folks hear about all his accomplishments, his influence on music and musicians, and his strong advocacy for social causes, I think they're reminded that he really is an American icon.

"He's all things to all people in terms of his music," he said. "If you're into rock or rockabilly, country music or folk. His appeal is so broad."

Garner described Cash as a hero for the downtrodden and an advocate for social causes.

"He was a rags-to-riches story," he said. "He picked cotton and grew up to play for presidents. He was an international superstar. An Arkansas boy who made good."

Garner described Cash's musical style as "straight-ahead with a boom-chika sound. From the first three notes, you probably know it's a Johnny Cash song. It sounds like a train."

Marshal Grant, Cash's bass player said that Cash and his band didn't try to create their unique sound, explaining, "It's all we could create," according to Garner who noted, "They were limited in their abilities as musicians so their success and their sound were born."

Musical legends always inspire some misconceptions. For Cash, the main misconception is that he did prison time, according to Garner.

"I can remember my grandmother saying he was in prison – don't listen to him," he recalled. "The only time he was in prison was to perform there. The myth is that he killed someone. I have people come up to me and say, 'You know, he was in prison because he shot someone.' I say, 'No, that's just a song.'"

And most people don't understand why he wore black.

"He identified himself with the poor and beaten down," Garner said. "He laid down a laundry list of things that are wrong and until those things change, he's going to wear black."

Garner said his Cash tributes are attended by both young and old.

"He has become relevant again," he said. "The 20-somethings think Cash is cool. Here's a guy who's relevant to a generation that wasn't even born when he had his hits. Middle age to seniors come because they grew up with Johnny Cash. I talk to people after the shows who saw Johnny Cash live. It takes them back to what they were doing at the time."

Garner performed as Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison, exactly 40 years after Cash's famous performance there.

"I remember we did the same set that Johnny Cash did there in 1968. We did what we did to tip our hat. I remember there was one older gentleman who yelled out, 'Yeah, I remember that!' and I looked at him and he looked like he did."

The Cash Tribute show band is: Denny Colleret of Vacaville, who picks the electric guitar in the unique style of Luther Perkins; Rick Duncan of Lodi, who provides the low notes on the bass; and Nick Auriemmo of Lodi, who keeps time on the drums.

For tickets ($25) or more information, visit www.FoxVisalia.org or call 625-1369.

Tempest Brings Celtic Rock Sound to Lindsay Community Theater

Celebrating the release of its 25th anniversary album, Tempest returns to the Valley to bring its unique Celtic rock sound to the Lindsay Community Theater on January 18.

"The 25th Anniversary Concert" is Tempest's latest CD, and will be available for the first time at the Lindsay concert. Bursting with life and energy, the recording captures Tempest in full flight onstage and includes old favorites alongside new material. This limited edition CD is only available directly from Tempest.

Since forming in 1988, Tempest has delivered a globally-renowned hybrid of high-energy folk rock fusing Irish reels, Scottish ballads, Norwegian influences and other world music elements. The last 24 years have seen the San Francisco Bay Area based act release 15 critically acclaimed CDs and play more than 2,000 gigs.

Hailing from Oslo, Norway, founding member and lead singer/electric mandolinist Lief Sorbye is recognized as a driving force in the modern folk-rock movement. He started Tempest after years of touring and recording on the folk circuit.

San Francisco fiddler Kathy Buys brings her international award winning playing to the Tempest stage. Her experience performing world-fusion music with high energy dance bands combined with many years of playing Irish traditional music in America and Ireland makes her a perfect fit for Tempest.

Newcomer Caith Threefires is from Boston. He's an old friend of the band, and brings a strong background in both rock'n'roll and traditional folk music, an energetic stage presence and skillful bass playing.

Born in Colorado and brought up in small town Missouri, Gregory Jones has a fiery hard-rocking approach to the guitar. His experience and understanding of Celtic music has made him a fast favorite with fans, new and old alike.

Tempest

Cuban-born drummer Adolfo Lazo, an original Tempest member, colors the band's sound with inventive rhythms and rock-steady drumming.

Tempest is regularly featured at prestigious festivals including the Philadelphia Folk Festival, Denmark's Skagen Festival, Britain's Cropredy Festival and the Winnipeg Folk Festival in Canada. The band is also a mainstay at countless American Celtic festivals.

The Lindsay Community Theater is located at 190 N. Elmwood, in downtown Lindsay.

Tickets for the 7:30pm show are $15 in advance (at lindsaycommunitytheater.com) and $20 at the door. For more information, call 284-2223.

'Crossing Borders Tour' to Make Stop at Mavericks in Visalia

Eli Barsi

On Saturday, January 4, Mavericks Coffee House in Visalia will welcome back Eli Barsi, a singer/songwriter from Saskatchewan, Canada, and for the first time, Barry Ward, from Elbert, Colorado, for a 7pm concert, as part of the duo's "Crossing Borders Tour."

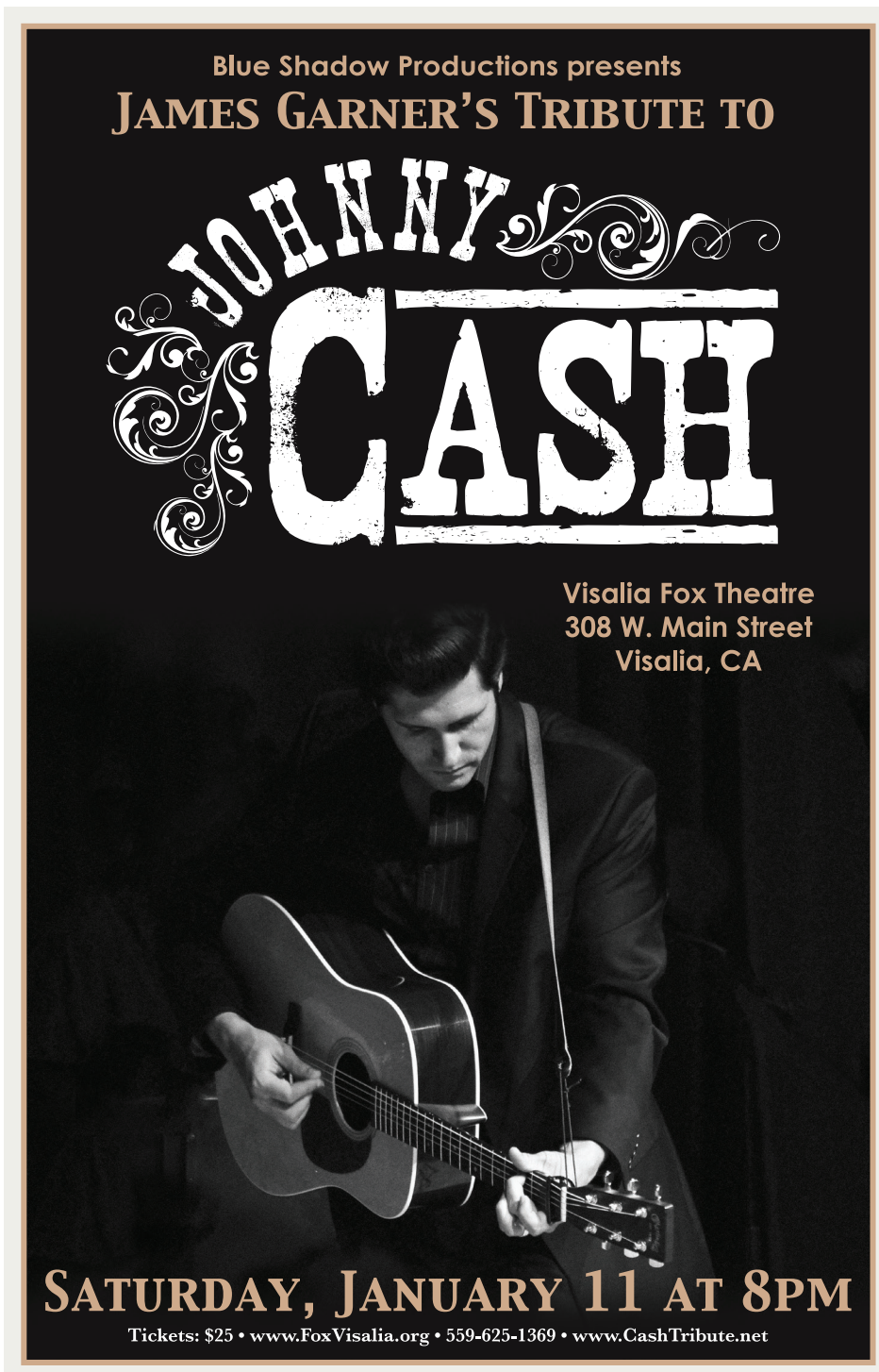
Barsi, who has several western music albums to her credit, was a part of the legendary Sons of the Pioneers Show in Branson, Missouri. Her versatile style of music includes western, bluegrass, folk, country and gospel. She is also considered one of the finest yodelers in cowboy music.

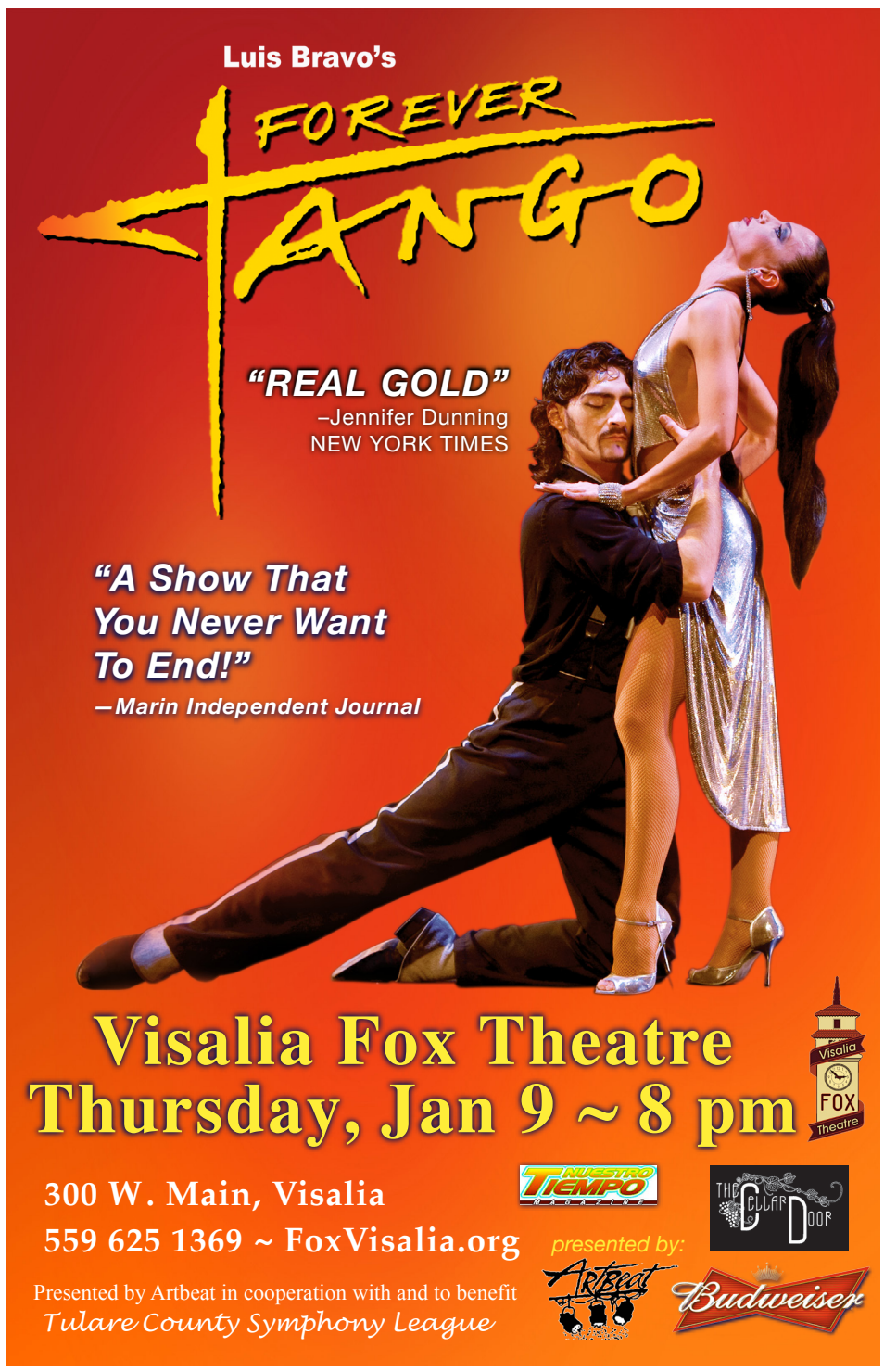
Ward, also a singer/songwriter, has performed in many venues ranging from the 2002 Winter Olympics in Utah, to Cameroon, Africa, to the The Great American Cowboy Concert in Carnegie Hall. In addition to performing western and cowboy music, he is an award-winning gospel music performer.

For tickets ($25) or more information, call Mavericks at 624-1400, or stop by at 238 E. Caldwell Avenue, Visalia.

Barsi and Ward will also be providing the special music and leading worship at Calvary Chapel, 11720 Avenue 264, Visalia, at the 8:30am and 10:30am services on Sunday, January 5.

Barry Ward





Budweiser EVENT CALENDAR

MUSIC

January

Jan. 5 – Danielle Belen 3pm
Virtuoso Violinist Danielle Belen will return after 3 years, to perform at the Main Street Theater in Visalia. For information and tickets, visit threeriversperformingarts.org.

Jan. 7 – Cody Torres – 7-10pm
On Tuesdays, singer and musician Cody Torres performs at Crawdaddys Visalia playing classic Country and Rock hits. For information, visit CrawdaddysVisalia.com.

Jan. 7 – Salsa Tuesdays – 7pm
Every Tuesday night at The Cellar Door features beginner dance lessons at 8pm, music and dancing follows. Cover is $5 for this 21+ event. Partners not required. For information, call 287-7067.

Jan. 8 – David Laswell and the Rounders – 7-10pm
On Wednesdays, its KJUG Country Music night and David Laswell and the Rounders at Crawdaddys Visalia, 333 E Main Street. For information, visit CrawdaddysVisalia.com.

Jan. 11 – Tribute to Johnny Cash – 8pm
James Garners' Tribute to Johnny Cash will be held at the Visalia Fox. For tickets and information, visit foxvisalia.org.

Jan. 15 – 3 Doors Down Benefit Concert – 7:30pm
3 Doors Down will perform in concert to benefit the Visalia Rescue Mission at Visalia Fox Theater. Tickets range from $30-60. For information and tickets, visit foxvisalia.org.

Jan. 18 – Locals Night – 7:30pm
Tulare County Symphony Orchestra's very own musicians take their turns as resident artists in front of the orchestra at the Visalia Fox Theatre, 308 W. Main St., Visalia. For more information, visit tcsymphonyleague.org.

Jan. 18 – Celtic Rock with Tempest – 7:30pm
The Lindsay Community Theater will present Celtic Rock, a renowned hybrid of high-energy Folk Rock fusing Irish reels, Scottish ballads, Norwegian influences and other world music elements. For tickets, visit lindsaycommunitytheater.primetix.com.

Jan. 23 – Styx – 7:30pm
Styx will perform at the Visalia Fox Theater. Tickets, $36-86, are available at foxvisalia.org.

Jan. 29 – Tommy Emmanuel – 7:30pm
Solo guitarist Tommy Emmanuel will perform at the Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets, $35-$125, are available at foxvisalia.org.

February

Feb. 2 – Duo W – 3pm
Violin and Cello Duo W take a fresh and engaging approach to classical music at the Main Street Theater in Visalia. For information and tickets, visit threeriversperformingarts.org.

Feb. 8 – American Brilliance – 7:30pm
Tulare County Symphony Orchestra celebrates the Bull Moose president Teddy Roosevelt with special guest Clay Jenkinson portraying and narrating the tough as nails president in composer Chris Brubeck's musical biography and tribute. For more information, visit tcsymphonyleague.org.

Feb. 22 – A Tribute to Legendary Ladies of Country Music – 7:30pm
The Lindsay Community Theater will present A Tribute to Legendary Ladies of Country Music, featuring Sonya Diane Jones. For tickets, visit lindsaycommunitytheater.primetix.com.

Feb. 28 – Audra McDonald Concert – 7:30pm
Two-time Grammy Award Winner Audra McDonald, a Valley native, will perform at the L.J. Williams Theater. For tickets visit, ticketfly.com.

March

March 6 – Merle Haggard – 8pm
Merle Haggard will perform at the Hanford Fox Theatre. Tickets, $55, $65 and $75, are available at foxhanford.com or 584-7823.

March 9 – Calidore Quartet - 3pm
As part of its North American and European Tour, Calidore Quartet will perform at the Main Street Theater in Visalia. For information and tickets, visit threeriversperformingarts.org.

March 13 – Kenny Rogers – 8pm
Kenny Rogers will perform at the Hanford Fox Theatre. Tickets, $55, 65, $75 and $85, are available at foxhanford.com or 584-7823.

March 15 – Lacy J. Dalton – 7:30pm
Country artist Lacy J. Dalton will perform at The Lindsay Community Theater, 190 N Elmwood Ave. For information, visit lindsaycommunitytheater.com.

April

April 11-13 – 41st Annual Jazzaffair
The Sierra Traditional Jazz Club of Three Rivers will hold the 41st Annual Jazzaffair at the Lions Arena. Hot jazz, food booths, and four performance venues are featured. Free shuttles will also be available. Bands include High Sierra Jazz Band Host Band, Au Brothers / Howard Miyata, Bob Draga, Cornet Chop Suey, High Street Band, Ivory and Gold, Jerry Krahn, Night Blooming Jazzmen, Reedley River Rats, Titan Hot Seven, Tom Rigney and Flambeau and Wally's Warehouse Waifs. For information, visit jazzaffair.info.

EVENTS

January

Jan. 3 – Tulare County Digital Photo Contest
Tulare County's Information & Communications Technology Department (TCiCT) is hosting the Second Annual Digital Photography Contest. The contest showcases the beauty of Tulare County. The deadline to enter is January 3 by 5pm. Information and entry forms available at tularecounty.ca.gov/tcict.

Jan. 3 - Alumni Hall of Fame Nomination Deadline
The deadline to submit nominations for The Fourth Annual Porterville College Foundation Hall of Fame is Jan. 3. The Banquet will be held March 8 at River Island Country Club. Nomination forms are available at the Porterville College Foundation website: portervillecollege.edu/foundation.

Jan. 4 – Friends of the Library Book Sale – 9am
The first Saturday of each month is the Friends of the Tulare Public Library used book sale.

Jan. 7 - Author Sésar A. Carreño Book Signing
Local author Sésar A. Carreño will be at the Tulare Public Library, Visalia Branch, to sign copies of his new book Images of America, which includes rarely seen images of Tulare.

Jan. 10 – Beginning Computers, part 1 –8:30am
The Tulare Public Library will hold a computer class. To register for book clubs or computer classes call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

Jan. 15 – Master Gardener Training Class.
A 22-week science-based training course will be held from Jan. 15 through June 11. Master Gardeners are trained by the University of California Cooperative Extension to share research-based knowledge and information on home horticulture, pest management, and sustainable landscape practices in their communities. To register and for more information, visit cekings.ucanr.edu and click on Master Gardener.

Jan. 17 – Beginning Computers, part 2 –8:30am
The Tulare Public Library will hold a computer class. To register for book clubs or computer classes call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

Jan. 19 – A Bridal Odyssey – 11am-4pm
A Bridal Odyssey, Central Valley's longest running bridal show, will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. For information visit abridalodyssey.com.

Jan. 20 – Grangeville Rose Pruning Demonstration
UCCE Tulare/Kings Master Gardeners will hold a demonstration using IPM (Integrated Pest Management). For information, call 852-2735 on Thursdays from 9:30 to 11:30am.

Jan. 22 – 2014 Sexual Harassment Prevention Training – 7:30-10am
Visalia Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with Pacific Employers, will present the state mandated Sexual Harassment Prevention Training (SHPT) Seminar & Workshop with full breakfast at the Lamp Liter Inn in Visalia. California Assembly Bill 1825 (AB 1825) requires California employers with 50 or more employees to provide all personnel who have "Supervisory Authority" a minimum of two hours of Sexual Harassment Prevention Training every two years. The seminar will be offered on four days: Jan. 22, April 23, July 23 and October 22. Cost is $35 for Pacific Employers and Chamber members. Call the Visalia Chamber at 734-5876 for reservations.

Jan. 24 – COS Giants Baseball Banquet
Meet the Giants Dinner/Dance and Silent Auction, a fundraiser for the College of Sequoia's Baseball Team, will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. For information, visit baseball.cos.edu.

Jan. 24 – Lemoore Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet
Lemoore Chamber of Commerce will present awards for the citizen, business and organization of the year. Event and table sponsorship opportunities available by calling 924-6401.

Jan. 25 – Lindsay Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet – 6pm
The Lindsay Chamber Awards Banquet will honor individuals, businesses and organizations that have made a contribution to the community. The dinner will be held at McDermont Field House and Sports Center. For nomination forms and sponsorship information, visit thelindsaychamber.com.

Jan. 25 – Chumash Stories – 1pm
The Tulare Public Library will host a special presentation of Chumash Stories told by Alan 'Spirit Hawk' Salazar. He grew up in the Hanford-Tulare area, and will be sharing some of his experiences and Native American history in this educational presentation. All ages are welcome.

Jan. 25 – Shred Event
Habitat for Humanity of Tulare County will host a Shred Event with ServiceMaster by Benevento to help businesses that need to get rid of paper clutter. For information, 734-4040.

Jan. 29 – 2014 Pistachio Day
The Statewide Pistachio Day Convention will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. The gathering delivers the latest research-based production practices for growers. Registration and information available at ucanr.edu/sites/pistachioday.

Jan. 30 – Bigger Better Events that Sell - 10am-12pm
As part of its Business Development Series, Lemoore and Hanford Chambers of Commerce will feature a presentation about powerful online tools that help make event promotion more effective. The event will be held at the Kings County Office of Education, Lemoore Conference Center, 876 E. "D" Street. For information, visit lemoorechamberofcommerce.com.

February

Feb. 2 – Super Bowl Sprint
The Creative Center will hold its annual Super Bowl Sprint. Walkers, runners and spectators welcome. For information visit, thecreativecenter-visalia.org.

Feb. 7-9 – Visalia Home & Patio Springfest
The 21st Annual Visalia Home & Patio Springfest, held at the Visalia Convention Center, will feature more than 350 home and garden displays. For information, visit VisaliaHomeShows.com.

Feb. 9 – 4th Annual Phylum Feast
As part of the Darwin Day celebration honoring science and critical thinking, the South Valley Skeptics will hold its 4th annual Phylum Feast in Visalia. For information and reservations visit sovalskeptics.org.

Feb. 11-13 – World Ag Expo 2014
The International Agri-Center will host the World Ag Expo in Tulare. For information, visit worldagexpo.com

Feb. 22 – Wine Auction
Exeter Chamber of Commerce is selling raffle tickets for a Wine Auction tree. The winner will receive 109 bottles of fine wine and everything else on the tree. Only 500 tickets will be sold. The drawing will be held at the Exeter Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards banquet. Winner need not be present to win. For tickets, $20, and information, visit exeterchamber.com.

March 1 & 29 and April 12 – Fireline Safety for Hired Vendors - 8am-5pm
Fireline Safety for Hired Vendors will take place March 1, March 29, and April 12 from 8am to 5pm in the PC Forum. Cost: $70 per person. The PC Fire Technology Department, the U.S. Forest Service and CAL FIRE will offer this one- day training that is required annually for operators of privately-owned

KIDS

Jan. 2 & 9 Reading is So Delicious – 2-4pm
The Tulare Public Library Winter Reading Program continues with activities in the Olympic Room.

Jan. 11 Reading is So Delicious – 1pm
The Tulare Public Library Winter Reading Program Reading is So Delicious will conclude in Olympic Room.

Jan. 14 – COOL Night South – 5:30-7:30pm
Tulare County Office of Education COOL Night (College Offers Opportunities for Life) is an event for middle school students (grades 6-8) and their parents to explore high school, college, and career opportunities. Parent and student components are offered. The event will be held at Porterville College. For information, visit tcoe.org or call 733-6101.

Jan. 14 15 & 19 – YU-GI-OH – 5-6pm
Young adults, ages 10-19, can sharpen YU-GI-OH strategy skills from 5-6 p.m. on January 14 and 15 at Tulare Public Library. Then play in the tournament from 5-7 p.m. on January 29. o register for book clubs or computer classes call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

Jan. 25 – Academic Decathlon - 8:30am-3pm
Academic Decathlon is a countywide student event for grades nine through twelve. It is part of the National Academic Decathlon competition. Schools field teams of up to nine members divided by thirds into Honors, Scholastic, and Varsity. Students compete in a series of ten academic events including written examinations, speech, interview and Super Quiz. The winner in Tulare County competes at the state level; the state winner competes at the national level. The interview, speech and essays will be held at Porterville College. Testing, Super Quiz Relay and Awards will be held Feb. 1, 8:30am-5pm, at Mission Oak High School, Tulare. For information, contact Laura Voshall at laurav@ers.tcoe.org or call 651-3044.

Jan. 25 – Kid's Activities – 1-2 p.m.
Kids' Activities will take place every Saturday from 1:00 - 2:00 pm in the Olympic Room of the Tulare Public Library. A special event will be Chumash stories told by Alan'Spirit Hawk' Salazar on the 25th.

Jan. 28 & 30 – Mock Trial – 5-8pm
High school students throughout Tulare County compete as lawyers, plaintiffs, and defendants to gain experience in public speaking and the law. Local lawyers serve as judges and advisors. Events will be held Jan. 28 & 30; Feb. 4, 6, & 13 at the Tulare County Courthouse and on Feb. 20 at the El Diamante High School Theater, Visalia. For information visit tcoe.org.

Jan. 28 – Teen Game Night – 5pm
Teen Game Night for ages 13 to 19 is held on the Last Tuesday of each month in the Tulare Public Library Charter Room.

COMMUNITY

January

Jan. 3 – Central Valley Parkinson's Support Group – 10:30am
Central Valley Parkinson's Support Group will meet in the Pre School Center of Visalia Unified Methodist Church, 5200 W. Caldwell, Visalia.

Jan. 7-30 - Zumba - 6:30-7:30pm
A Porterville College Community Education course, Zumba, allows you to get fit while having fun. Zumba will take place Jan. 7-30 from 6:30 - 7:30pm Tuesdays and Thursdays. Cost: $20 per session. Look for more Zumba sessions each month. Register for classes in the Porterville College Business Office during business hours. For more information, call 791-2492 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu/community_ed.

Jan. 8 & 22 – The Knitting Club – 5:30
Every other Wednesday the Knitting Club meets in the Olympic Room of the Tulare Public Library. To register for book clubs or computer classes call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

Jan. 9 – Philatelic Society Stamp Scramble – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society regular meeting and auction will also feature a Stamp Scramble at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer Street. Doors open at 6:15. The meeting begins at 7pm with the auction starting at 7:30pm A raffle is held during each auction. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

Jan. 11 – The Second Saturday Book Club – 11am
The Second Saturday Book Club will meet in the Charter Room to discuss Tenth of December by George Saunders.To register for book clubs or computer classes call 685-4503 or stop by the Tulare Public Library research and information desk.

Jan. 15 – Tulare Kings Master Gardeners Class
UCCE Tulare/Kings Master Gardeners will begin its Master Gardens class. For information, call 852-2735 on Thursdays from 9:30 to 11:30am

Jan. 21-May 14 - Exercise for the Community
A Porterville College Community Education course, Exercise for the Community, will be held Tuesdays from 7-8am and 8-9am in Rm. FIT 751 in the Fitness Center. Cost is $80. Register for classes in the Porterville College Business Office during business hours. For more information, call 791-2492 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu/community_ed.

Jan. 23 – Visalia Philatelic Society Auction – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society will meet at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer Street. Doors open at 6:15 for bidders to examine auction items. The meeting begins at 7pm with the auction starting at 7:30pm A raffle is held during each auction. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

Jan. 25 – Sci/Fi Book Club – 1pm
The Tulare Public Library Sci/Fi Book Club will discuss Interworld by Neil Gaiman and Michael Reaves. To register for book clubs or computer classes call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

Jan. 30 – Last Thursday Book Club – 6 p.m.
The Tulare Public Library Last Thursday book Club will discuss The Island of Lost Maps by Miles Harvey. To register for book clubs or computer classes call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

February

Feb. 6 – Visalia Philatelic Society Auction – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society will meet at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer St. Doors open at 6:15 for bidders to examine auction items. The meeting begins at 7pm with the auction starting at 7:30pm A raffle is held during each auction. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

Feb. 15 – Lemoore Kiwanis Valentine Dinner
The Lemoore Kiwanis will hold its Valentine Dinner. For information, 924-8811.

Feb. 20 – Visalia Philatelic Society Auction – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society will meet at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer St. Doors open at 6:15 for bidders to examine auction items. The meeting begins at 7pm with the auction starting at 7:30pm A raffle is held during each auction. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

March

Mar. 1 – Lemoore Lions Mongolian Barbecue
Lemoore Lions will hold a Mongolian Barbecue at the Civic Auditorium.

Mar. 13 – Visalia Philatelic Society Auction – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society will meet at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer St. Doors open at 6:15 for bidders to examine auction items. The meeting begins at 7pm with the auction starting at 7:30pm A raffle is held during each auction. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

Mar. 27 – Visalia Philatelic Society Auction – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society will meet at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer St. Doors open at 6:15 for bidders to examine auction items. The meeting begins at 7pm with the auction starting at 7:30pm A raffle is held during each auction. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

April

April 10 – Visalia Philatelic Society Auction – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society will meet at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer Street. Doors open at 6:15 for bidders to examine auction items. The meeting begins at 7pm with the auction starting at 7:30pm. A raffle is held during each auction. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

April 24 – Visalia Philatelic Society Auction – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society will meet at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer Street. Doors open at 6:15 for bidders to examine auction items. The meeting begins at 7pm with the auction starting at 7:30pm A raffle is held during each auction.

See more events online

ourvalleyvoice.com

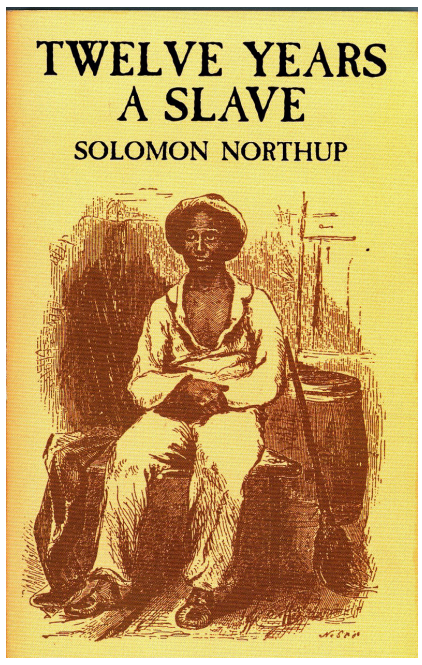
Twelve Years a Slave is a Nonfiction Epic

HANNAH GREEN

In 1841, Solomon Northup, a free black man living in Saratoga Springs, New York, is drugged, kidnapped, beaten and sold into slavery. He survives as a slave for the next 12 years.

Northup secures his freedom after those 12 years of imprisonment. He goes on to write his autobiography, Twelve Years a Slave, using the novel to detail the events and conditions of his bondage and subsequent release. Twelve Years denounces the institution and practice of slavery. Northup testifies the facts of his life and through careful writing leaves it to his readers to "determine, whether even the pages of fiction present a picture of more cruel wrong or severer bondage." The strength of this declaration along with the moral absolutism, authority, and conviction of his story lead the reader to imagine Odysseus, Dante or Beowulf. Indeed, though Northup's life and novel are completely factual, the author has written an epic.

Although epics are usually allegorical, Northup's experiences are fantastic enough that they need no mythology to enhance the tale, and need no wisdom that comes from legend as Northup's own real wisdom and common sense are as strong and powerful as they are. Many elements of the epic appear in Twelve Years: a hero of incredible stature, supernatural feats and a necessary journey that takes our hero far and wide. Northup travels from the free North to the enslaving South, over sea and land and through swamp. He encounters appalling acts of cruelty, surprising kindnesses, death, dreams and hope. Our protagonist is a titan; although he is rendered suddenly and heartlessly from his wife, three children, and sustaining sovereignty, he makes the best of his awful circumstances, and quickly learns to survive on multiple plantations under masters who are both gentle and villainous. He is ingenious at times, helping secure food, safety and hope for his fellow slaves, including devising a method to help his comrades avoid whippings while leading his master to believe punishments are carried out. He even manages to make an income through his prodigious violin-playing skills. In the end, he accomplishes the greatest, most unbelievable feat of all, and is able to depart from his life of toil and servitude. Above all during his epic, Northup in engaged on a quest with one aim: his freedom. Better than a story of imagination, Twelve Years a Slave is an epic that is true.



For all its parallels to the classical epics, Northup's writing style is as a strict nonfiction account. He works to rid the novel of any fanciful writing style that may undermine the believability of his report, instead relying on the fantastical events within to command his readers. Northup's writing is straightforward, giving facts and evidence to the readers as candid, sincere observations. All literary and dramatic elements are geared toward reminding the reader of the truthfulness of this tale. One such stylized element that is conspicuous in its absence is foreshadowing. In such a riveting tale, foreshadowing could be appealing to an author as a means to build anticipation and urgency in the reader, yet here, the effect of sacrificing foreshadowing is that the reader is reminded that this story is not an historical fiction, and it is not a work of imagination for either the reader or the author. Twelve Years is an accurate, nonfiction retelling of events, and therefore foregoes conventional performances of allegorical storytelling. Far from causing the novel to be dry or dull, these artful techniques layer intrigue into the novel, as the horror is more significant and engrossing because it is real.

The form of the novel is a nonfiction epic; the reason for the novel is to guide its audience to conclude that slavery is a morally wrong institution. Northup writes of being held against his will, chained and abused, under the very shadow of the nation's Capitol – the Capitol in which representatives boast of freedom and equality for all men. He engenders sympathy for individual slaves, writing of their plights from a humanitarian perspective. Northup shares stories of a mother who dies battling depression because her babies are taken from her, a woman who is flayed because her mistress is jealous of her, a man who is devoured alive by hunting dogs, and alludes to child molestation and the violence and powerlessness that many enslaved women experience when their master is a tyrant. Yet even while writing of the dangers of being black, Northup never forgets that his audience is white.

It's easy to forget that the novel's argument is necessary. Most modern people believe firmly in the wrongness of slavery, and to be told that slavery is wrong is redundant and even insulting, implying that the reader might not have already held that conviction. But Northup is writing to an audience in the mid-1800s, which means, of course, that his audience is primarily a white one (as access to a printing press and literature is limited to those with money and social standing), and the country is still divided, pre-Civil War, over the issue of slavery. Northup must use Twelve Years to argue against slavery to the very people who benefit from the cheap labor and who have perfected the art of rationalization—or, just as difficult, Northup must convince people who do not bother to justify slavery because they don't care about the morality of the institution one way or another. To accomplish this, Northup uses a combination of the aforementioned anecdotes of harm, many appeals to reason, and also the preference that white folk have for other white folk.

To accomplish this, Northup uses a mixture of arguments: one argument is meant to engender sympathy for the slave's plight, one is to appeal to the reason of potentially sympathetic white readers, and one argument uses the preference of white folks for white ideas and actions to appeal to racist white readers. He occasionally panders to his audience. In one memorable chapter, Northup relays a conversation between his master and a visiting white man to the plantation. The two become engrossed in a conversation debating the merits and failings of slavery. His master, laughing, supports the institution. The visitor believes it to be wicked, and details many of the reasons that slavery should not exist. Northup includes more direct dialogue of this conversation than of almost any other passage of his autobiography, lending weight to the exchange. Through including the visitor's ideas about slavery, Northup is able to use a credible source—a white man—as a parrot of his own ideals, inciting more consideration from his readership than a black man alone would be able to. This is a smart logistical move, though it's painful that it's necessary, and that the reader couldn't just take the oppressed person's word for his own experience.

We see this again at the end of the novel—Northup, with the help of the white visitor, manages to send word to friends in the North who can prove his legal standing as a free man and who bodily rescue him from the plantation on which he has been enslaved. However, when it comes to the court case, Northup's original captors claim that Northup is lying, and he is arrested. Even the newspaper accounts of the trial refer to the white men by their given names and to Northup as simply "the colored man." Although Northup is the victim of a crime, it takes a white lawyer to speak for him before the courts heed his account. Finally, he is declared legally free—still, as he has been legally free all these 12 years—and Solomon Northup returns home to his astonished and overjoyed wife and children.

Solomon Northup writes an epic autobiography condemning slavery. Although written over 150 years ago, the lessons are still pertinent. He denounces the mistreatment of human beings to enhance others' economical gain, brings to light the myriad abuses that can and do occur in situations under an imbalance of power, and makes it clear that those in power will listen to those who share their classifications before they listen to disenfranchised individuals. Although legal, historical slavery in the United States is thankfully an account of the past, Twelve Years a Slave works to remind us all that we can use our own logical and empathy to better the lives of others and choose to be on the right side of history.

THEATER

Jan. 9 – Forever Tango – 7:30pm
For one night only, Broadway's Forever Tango will perform at the Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets, $25-100, are available at foxvisalia.org.

Jan. 24-25 – Respect
"Respect," a high-energy review of women in music from the early 1900s to the present, will be presented by The Visalia Players at The Ice House Theatre, located at the corner of Race and Santa Fe in Visalia. Evening performances are at 7:30pm on Jan. 24-25 and a matinee will be at 2pm on Jan. 26. For information, visit visaliaplayers.org.

Jan. 30-31 – A Midsummer Night's Dream – 7:30pm
College of the Sequoias' Theatre Department will remount two performances of its hit adaptation of A Midsummer Night's Dream to raise money for the production's inclusion in the prestigious Kennedy Center's American College Theater Festival in February. Cost is $20 general admission and $10 students. A special VIP pre-show on Jan. 31 for $100 will include VIP room with heavy hors d'oeuvres, wine and entertainment, VIP seating for the production, VIP room with deserts and drinks during intermission.

Jan. 31 and Feb. 1-2 – Respect
"Respect," a high-energy review of women in music from the early 1900s to the present, will be presented by The Visalia Players at The Ice House Theatre, located at the corner of Race and Santa Fe in Visalia. Evening performances are at 7:30pm on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1 and a matinee will be at 2pm on Feb. 2. For information, visit visaliaplayers.org.

Feb. 6-9, 14-16 and 20-22 – The Drowsy Chaperone
Encore Theatre Company presents "The Drowsy Chaperone" at the Encore Theatre, 324 South N Street, Tulare. Advance tickets available. For more information, visit www.tulareencoretheatre.org.

ART

Jan. 3 – First Saturday in Three Rivers – 11am-5pm
First Saturday in Three Rivers will feature open art studios and art vendors. For information, visit 1stsaturdaytr.com.

Jan. 3 – Favorite Places Exhibit – 5-7pm
Michael's Jewelry on Main hosts an art exhibit by Jeri Burzin, photographer and Toni Best, gourd artist. The "Favorite Places" exhibit features Jeri's images from Yosemite and the Southwest and Toni's beautiful, unique gourds. Artist reception is Jan. 3, for the exhibit that will run through March 1. For information, call 967-8635, or visit maingalleryvisalia.com.

Jan. 9-Feb. 22 – Tulare County Varied Impressions
The Tulare Historical Museum presents Tulare County Varied Impressions featuring local artists and local scenes. For information, tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

Jan. 11 – Bob Boomer – 3-5pm
Arts Visalia Artist Lecture Series will include a presentation by Wood Sculptor Bob Boomer, who portrays Native American people in his work. For information visit artsvisalia.org

Feb. 1 – First Saturday in Three Rivers – 11am-5pm
First Saturday in Three Rivers will feature open art studios and art vendors. For information, visit 1stsaturdaytr.com.

Feb 4-May 8 - Community Ceramics - 3:30-5:30pm
A Porterville College Community Education Course, Community Ceramics, includes the techniques in hand-building, slab-building and wheel throwing. Class starts Feb. 4 and runs through May 8 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 -5:30pm. Cost: $60. Supplies not included (bring bag of clay to class). Register for classes in the Porterville College Business Office during business hours. For more information on Community Education Classes call 791-2492 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu/community_ed.

'Tulare County: Varied Impressions' Opens January 9 in Tulare

The tenth annual "Tulare County: Varied Impressions" art exhibit opens January 9 in the Heritage Art Gallery of the Tulare Historical Museum. This unique show features the work of local artists depicting their "impressions" of the people and places in Tulare County.

A reception for the artists will be held from 5-7pm Thursday, January 9, in the Heritage Art Gallery. It is free and open to the public. The show continues through February 22.

The museum is located at 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare. Hours of operation are 10am-4pm, Thursday through Saturday. The museum is also open the third Sunday of the month for free from 12:30-4pm through May.

Admission is $5 for adults, $3 for seniors (55+) and Southern California Automobile Club members, $2 for students, and free for Tulare City Historical Society members and children under 5 years old.

"Summer Fades to Fall" will be on display at Varied Impressions.

For more information, call 686-2074.

"First Snow" by Bob Boomer

Visalia Art League to Host Talk by Wood Sculptor Bob Boomer

The Visalia Art League continues its Artist Lecture Series at Arts Visalia on Saturday, January 11, with a 3pm presentation by wood sculptor Bob Boomer. The artist, whose career spans 40 years, will share his personal inspirations, references, subject matter and wood sculpting techniques.

Growing up in the San Joaquin Valley, Boomer's love of working in wood began at a very young age. He comes from a long line of woodworkers and fine cabinetmakers and recalls carving wooden figures as early as age 12.

Boomer earned a bachelor of arts degree in industrial technology with a focus on wood, from Fresno State University. He began a career in teaching arts and crafts, then took a teaching job in woodworking and mechanical drawing in Hawaii, and began working there with native woods. Eventually, he left his teaching position to pursue a career as a professional sculptor.

Many prominent art magazines have featured articles on his work, including Art of the West, Southwest Art, Better Homes and Garden Wood Magazine. Boomer's awards include Artist Choice Award at the International Show in El Paso, and Gold Medal Takeaway Sculpture for A.I.C.A. in 1992 and 1993.

Boomer's love of history, and respect for the Native American people are present in his portrayals. "The proud and noble Native American people stand in harmony with the natural elements that surround them," he said.

Boomer, and his wife of 50 years, Carol, have made their home in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, just south of Yosemite National Park. The old rustic cabin behind the Boomer house, built by Ian Zumstein in 1947, has served as his working studio since 1978.

Acquiring a firewood permit, Bob searches and finds the exotic manzanita and weathered cedar that he predominately works in to create his incredible detailed carvings. His carvings range 20-40 inches high in size.

"I sculpt with the natural wood formations, rather than against them," he explained. "This balance with nature is evident in the subject matter I create."

Sometimes people are somewhat reluctant to handle his delicate carvings. Bob encourages the viewer to touch his carvings and connect with the piece. He wants them to feel the smooth and varied texture of each unique carving.

Admission is free to Visalia Art League members and students, otherwise $5 is the suggested donation. For more information about the event, call 739-0905. For more information about the artist, visit www.bobboomersculpture.com.

Amber Dawn Hilton creates collage images and has printed her work on skateboards.

John Ginsburg Gallery Presents 'Digital Pathways'

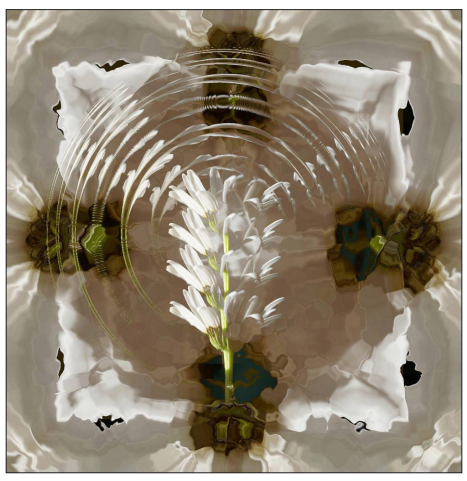
The Jon Ginsburg Gallery will host its first guest artist show of 2014, "Digital Pathways: Four Artists Convene," featuring the works of four Valley digital artists, each with their own style of digital art.

Elsah Cort of Three Rivers takes a spiritual path in her work. Her collages of photographs of natural elements blended with her original art make for very calming and thought-provoking pieces.

Susan R. Thompson of Lindsay uses her iPhone to create colorful, vibrant works of art out of her photographs. The results often have an edge to them and bit of the surreal.

Joanie Constable lives in Visalia and has been creating kaleidoscopic images from photos and fractal works for about four years and has recently begun having these images printed on metal. The medium has given her work a new depth not readily achieved on paper.

Amber Dawn Hilton is originally from Fresno, now residing in Visalia. Her work is a variety of collage images coming to together in words and shapes to give a very "pop" feel to her work. She also has printed her images on skateboards.



Joanie Constable creates kaleidoscopic images printed on metal.

A reception will be held at the Jon Ginsburg Gallery, 410 E. Race, Visalia, from 5-8pm on Friday, January 3, in conjunction with Visalia's First Friday Downtown. The reception provides an opportunity to meet the artists. The exhibition will also feature the work of clients at The Creative Center.

The show runs through February 28. Check in at the Creative Center office, 606 N. Bridge, Visalia, 10am-3pm, Monday through Friday, for a tour of the gallery, or call 733-9329.

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Symphony

Continued from p. 17

How did the "Roosevelt in Cowboy Land" piece come about?

"I was commissioned to write 'Roosevelt in Cowboy Land' by the Bismarck-Mandan Symphony Orchestra. The conductor, Beverly Everett, had performed my narrated orchestral piece 'Quiet Heroes: A Symphonic Salute to the Flag Raisers at Iwo Jima' and thought that I had the historical thirst, musical ability and narrative skills to create a piece to honor Teddy's time in North Dakota. By luck, Clay Jenkinson was a good friend of Beverly, an authority on Roosevelt and a gifted re-enactor/performer. Beverly realized that her friendship with me and with Clay would produce interesting and knowledgeable results that would further the creation of a new work about one of America's most formidable figures."

How did you collaborate with Clay?

"I had to do a lot of research about Roosevelt, so I asked Clay to recommend the best books to me that would give a good overview of T.R.'s life and his time in Cowboy Land. I knew very little about Roosevelt before then and his entire life story is truly fascinating. I followed my instincts to tell a story that included T.R.'s childhood and background. You need that to set up the unbelievable tragedy that inspired him to go out West to rediscover who he was. The middle of the piece is about his days in the wide-open West, and of course at the end I thought it was appropriate to put an overview on him becoming president and laying the foundation for our National Park System.

"Roosevelt was a radical. His own party thought they could rid themselves of the force of his personality and vision. They basically tried to ice him by luring him into the vice presidency, traditionally a place where political aspirations wither. The entire plan backfired when McKinley was assassinated and a principled man who could NOT be bought by special interests surprisingly became our President (and one of our greatest I might add)."

There is very little about the piece online. What is the music like?

"When I created my first draft, I made a demo in my home studio with my narration over a synthesized orchestra playing the music to enhance and underscore the story. I was nervous about Clay's reaction, but to my astonishment he had very few corrections to offer in terms of historical accuracy. Both Clay and Bev thought that I had found an artistic way to fuse narration and orchestral music to tell Roosevelt's story.

"There is a lot of narration, much more for example than Copland's 'Lincoln Portrait.' But then again this texture is art imitating life because Roosevelt was a gregarious talker and storyteller. He read a book a day all of his life and was well versed in almost everything. His mind absorbed knowledge like a sponge, and people think he may have had a photographic memory. Clay is a scholar of the first order, but NOT a wallflower, so he does Roosevelt on stage with an extroverted zest that holds your interest.

"Clay has a 'Roosevelt' voice that includes the high squeak in it that his contemporaries commented on. He also brings the enthusiasm that T.R. incorporated into every facet of his existence."

Is this the West Coast premiere of the piece?

Chris Brubeck

"The piece was premiered in Bismarck in late October 2011, but a week later if was also performed by the same orchestra as a featured event at a Theodore Roosevelt Symposium at Dickinson State University. They also have a magnificent digital library and resource center for T.R's amazing life. Clay is a well-known scholar in those circles, and we passed muster with some serious authors and historians in that crowd, including Douglas Brinkley and Edmond Morris. Beverly Everett also brought Roosevelt in Cowboy Land to the Bemidji Symphony during the 2012 season. I have performed with the Bemidji Symphony with my groups in the past, and Clay also is incredibly popular with the audience up in Minnesota.

"This is definitely the first West Coast performance. There is a 'cowboy culture' and a respect for natural beauty in the bones of your community so I am hopeful that this piece will resonate with your audience as well."

Did you and Bruce Kiesling know each other before you brought your Ansel Adams' piece here a year ago?

"Bruce and I have known each other for years. I am so pleased to have the opportunity to collaborate with him again. Your orchestra plays beautifully and Bruce is a wonderful conductor. We talked about how this was a good time for me to come back to Visalia.

"Ken Burns is putting out a new documentary series on PBS about the Roosevelts. Clay is a featured historian and 'talking head' in that series. There will be a renaissance of appreciation for Theodore Roosevelt and what his legacy means to every American. I hope my composition and Clay's performance, along with Bruce leading your orchestra will help shed some light on Roosevelt's remarkable story."

Also on the January 18th program is Copland's "Appalachian Spring," which also celebrates the Americana spirit. It includes the well-known Shaker melody "Simple Gifts."

Tickets are $30 to $39.50 at the symphony office. Student prices are $10. Tickets are also available at 732-8600 or by visiting www.tcsymphony.org.

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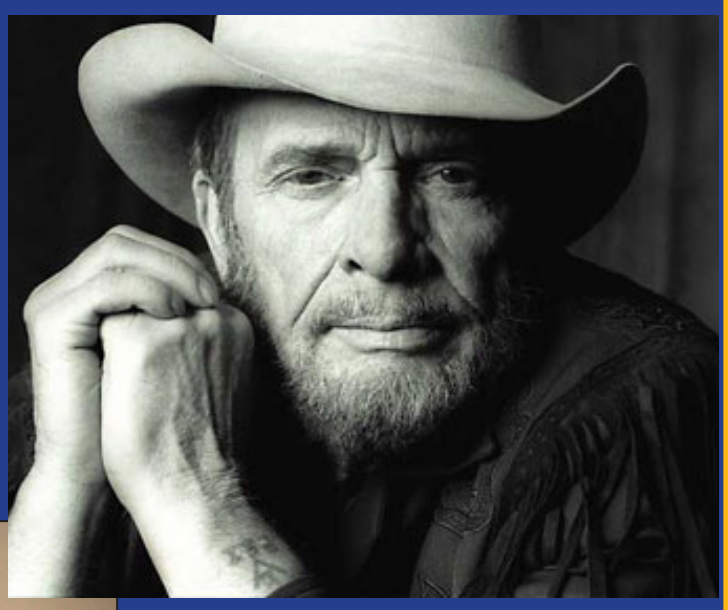

Kenny Rogers

Thursday, March 13, 2014
8:00PM

$85, $75, $65, $55

Both shows performed at the historic Hanford Fox Theatre
To purchase tickets online: www.foxhanford.com - or call (559) 584-7823.

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FOX THEATRE

3 Doors Down

Continued from p. 17

where he was employed prior to joining the VRM team. "There are a lot of great ideas brewing and some really great events in the works for the park. While working on these events, we're able to maintain a presence in the park and get people connected to the help they need."

3 Doors Down is no stranger to benefit events. In November, the band staged the 10th annual The Better Life Foundation Concert in Tunica, Mississippi.

Operating with the mission statement, "Changing the world, one life at a time," 3 Doors Down and the Visalia Rescue Mission seem to have a very common bond, only Stillwater points to VRM's more faith-based foundation: Hope and Restoration through Jesus Christ.

"That's the great thing about a faith-based organization jumping on board for a benefit event with a secular band – everyone can get involved," said Stillwater. "Whether you're a Christian, atheist or anything in between, we all want to see those in need in our community getting help."

Alongside some of their biggest hits, the band will reach into its extensive catalog to perform other fan favorites. Band members look forward to playing acoustic versions of these songs.

"We experimented with an acoustic show in Nashville and had such a great response that we decided to take it on the road," said singer Brad Arnold. "We've never toured like this before, some of these songs have never been played live."

Tickets are available at www.foxvisalia.com. To become a sponsor, visit www.ovalpark.org or www.vrmhope.org for more information.